United Nations A/71/323

General Assembly

Distr.: General
23 August 2016

Original: English

Seventy-first session
Item 139 of the provisional agenda*
Human resources management

Overview of human resources management reform: towards a global, dynamic, adaptable and engaged workforce for the United Nations

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In the present report, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 67/255, 68/252, 68/265, 70/244 and 70/286, the Secretary-General presents an overview of human resources management in the Organization, specifically addressing the human resources management reforms implemented since the sixty-third session of the General Assembly, or in the process of implementation. The report highlights the continued progress made under the initiative laid out in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Investing in people" (A/61/255) and his views on the way forward to achieve a more global, dynamic, adaptable and engaged workforce.

Major reform initiatives since the sixty-third session have focused on the priority areas of the contractual framework, including the harmonization of conditions of service; the talent management framework, including workforce planning; staffing and recruitment, including managed mobility; performance management; learning and career development; and, more recently, the implementation of a new United Nations common system compensation package. Major reform is also under way in the area of staff health and well-being.

The report concludes with the views of the Secretary-General on the manner in which the Organization should address the challenges facing human resources management in the future and signals his intention to present to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session an updated human resources management framework for the Organization. This framework will further develop the following three themes: (a) managing talent; (b) delivering human resources services; and (c) supporting the shaping of the organizational culture.

* A/71/150.

16-14644 (E) 230916

Please recycle

The current report supersedes all other reports on human resources management submitted to the General Assembly by the Secretary-General at its sixty-ninth and seventieth sessions, specifically the report entitled "Overview of human resources management reform: towards a global, dynamic and adaptable workforce for the United Nations" (A/69/190) and other related reports on mobility (A/69/190/Add.1 and A/70/254), performance management (A/69/190/Add.2), the young professionals programme (A/69/190/Add.3) and assessment of the system of desirable ranges (A/69/190/Add.4). The Assembly decided not to consider these reports, but rather to consider new and/or updated reports of the Secretary-General at its seventy-first session. The information and proposals contained in these previous reports has been updated in the present report and its addenda for consideration by the General Assembly.

The report has two addenda: an update on the implementation of the new staff selection and managed mobility system (A/71/323/Add.1); and a comprehensive review of the assessment of the system of desirable ranges (A/71/323/Add.2).

Contents

		Page
I.	Introduction	4
II.	Summary of human resources management reform initiatives	5
III.	Human resources management reform	8
	A. Contractual framework initiatives	8
	B. Talent management framework and initiatives	13
	C. Field needs and perspective	39
	D. Staff health and well-being	42
IV.	The way forward: a more integrated human resources management framework	48
V.	Action to be taken by the General Assembly	53
VI.	Summary of follow-up action taken to implement requests of the General Assembly in its resolutions 63/250, 65/247, 67/255, 68/252 and 68/265 and requests and recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions endorsed by the General Assembly	55
	A. General Assembly	55
	B. Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions	58
Annex		
	Summary of progress made in developing a comprehensive workforce planning system	59

I. Introduction

1. The changing global context and evolving mandates have caused the Organization to undertake a number of management reform initiatives, with the objective of making the Secretariat more efficient, effective and accountable. In the area of human resources management, this has included the continuation of human resources reforms envisioned in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Investing in people" (A/61/255), which was aimed at creating a truly integrated, field-oriented and global workforce. The report focused on two major areas of United Nations human resources management in need of reform: contractual arrangements and the talent management framework.

2. The first steps in the reform agenda were aimed at harmonizing disparate contractual arrangements and improving conditions of service. Both were major barriers to the movement of staff members within the Secretariat and between Headquarters and field locations. Other important reform initiatives included the implementation of the talent management framework (see A/65/305 and A/65/305/Add.3) and the new enterprise resource planning system for human resources management (Umoja). The proposed talent management framework was aimed at integrating workforce planning, staffing and recruitment, performance management, and learning and career development in order to more effectively deliver United Nations mandates. Further steps taken were to facilitate mobility and integrate staff in the field and at Headquarters into one global Secretariat (see A/68/358).

3. While conditions of service have been harmonized and steady progress has been made in implementing the talent management framework, many human resources management processes are still not yet fully integrated. The objective of a fully inclusive, adaptable and engaged workforce, which is able to deliver on the mandate of the Organization, including full gender balance and geographical representation, is yet to be achieved.

4. General Assembly mandates and the recommendations of oversight bodies on human resources management provide a useful road map to guide continued reform. Various recent technological initiatives, including the introduction of Umoja and the refinement of Inspira, have underscored the need for a more global, holistic and integrated approach to human resources management if the United Nations is to attain a truly global, dynamic, adaptable and engaged workforce. Furthermore, the Organization's need to operate in increasingly hazardous environments and to deliver on dynamic mandates has created an imperative to further safeguard the mental and physical health of its personnel.

5. In the present report, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 67/255, 68/252, 68/265, 70/244 and 70/286, the Secretary-General presents an overview of human resources management in the Organization, specifically addressing the human resources management reforms implemented since the sixty-third session of the General Assembly or in the process of implementation. The report highlights the continued progress made under the initiative set out in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Investing in people" (A/61/255), in particular in priority areas such as the contractual framework, including the harmonization of conditions of service, the talent management framework and, more recently, the implementation of the new United Nations common system

compensation package and a common system occupational safety and health framework.

6. The report concludes with the views of the Secretary-General on how the Organization should address the challenges facing human resources management going forward and signals his intention to present to the General Assembly an updated integrated human resources management framework for the Organization. The framework will further develop the following three themes: (a) managing talent; (b) delivering human resources services; and (c) supporting the shaping of the organizational culture.

7. The report supersedes all other reports on human resources management submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth and seventieth sessions, specifically the report entitled "Overview of human resources management reform: towards a global, dynamic and adaptable workforce for the United Nations" (A/69/190) and other related reports on mobility (A/69/190/Add.1 and A/70/254), performance management (A/69/190/Add.2), the young professionals programme (A/69/190/Add.3) and assessment of the system of desirable ranges (A/69/190/Add.4). The Assembly decided not to consider these reports, but to consider instead new and/or updated reports of the Secretary-General at its seventy-first session. The information and proposals contained in these previous reports has been updated in the present report and its addenda for consideration by the General Assembly.

8. The report has two addenda, which provide an update on the implementation of the mobility and career development framework (A/71/323/Add.1) under the new staff selection and managed mobility system (ST/AI/2016/1) and a comprehensive review of the assessment of the system of desirable ranges (A/71/323/Add.2).

II. Summary of human resources management reform initiatives

9. The Organization's greatest resource is its workforce. The General Assembly, in its resolution 67/255, requested the Secretary-General to submit a progress report on the implementation of ongoing human resources management reforms, including those approved in that resolution and in resolutions 63/250 and 65/247, with particular focus on whether those reforms were yielding the expected benefits, other efficiencies or specific improvements. In its resolution 68/265, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit annual reports on mobility until its seventy-second session.

10. The progress made thus far and the next steps are described in table 1 below.

Table 1
Summary of progress made in implementation of human resources reforms

Area	*Activities/milestones*	*Next steps*
Contractual reform	One-time review of permanent appointments conducted: of 5,908 cases, 4,094 were deemed eligible for conversion to permanent appointments as of July 2014	
	The first review on the granting of continuing appointments in 2012 resulted in 2,339 staff members in the Professional and higher categories and Field Service category and 560 staff in the General Service and related categories being granted continuing appointments	The review on the granting of continuing appointments for the year 2013 is under way
United Nations common system salaries and allowances	Following the adoption of General Assembly resolution 70/244, work commenced on preparations for the implementation of changes to the compensation package for internationally recruited staff	Implementation of the new United Nations common system salaries and allowances
Workforce planning	A five-step workforce planning methodology was developed	Strengthen workforce planning at the entity level
		Implement a workforce planning approach focused on a job network
		Improve integration between workforce planning and other talent management processes such as outreach, recruitment, learning and career development
	Several field operations undertook workforce planning pilot projects consistent with the new methodology and in connection with civilian staffing reviews, 14 of which were completed as at 31 December 2015	
Staff selection and recruitment	Steps undertaken to address delays in the recruitment process	
	Introduction of a pilot, unproctored, Internet-based pre-selection test for applicants for selected job openings within the management and administration network	Expand the use of Internet-based preselection tests to other job openings to reduce the number of personal history profiles to be manually reviewed by the hiring manager and thus reduce the recruitment timeline by up to an estimated 30 days

Area	*Activities/milestones*	*Next steps*
		Subject to a decision of the General Assembly, reduce the 60-day standard posting period for position-specific job openings for non-field recruitment to 30 days for positions in the Professional and higher categories
		The Secretary-General will continue to conduct a review of the overall staffing and recruitment process and solicit feedback from Departments and offices in order to identify further efficiencies
	Effective 1 January 2016, implementation of a new staff selection and managed mobility system, with the Political, Peace and Humanitarian Network (POLNET) as the first job network to transition into the new system	The information and telecommunications technology network will be the next job network to transition into the new system, on 1 January 2017
	Young professionals programme implemented annually, with first examinations carried out in December 2011	Implementation of the various elements for phase II of the young professionals programme in accordance with the implementation plan provided in A/65/305/Add.4
	Outreach strengthened through the establishment of the Outreach Unit in 2008	In order to ensure better results and impact, outreach initiatives will be strategically aligned with organizational priorities and respective entity mandates
		Strengthen the Organization's branding in order to enhance the link between talent needs, workforce segments and sources of potential talent
		Develop mechanisms to measure the effectiveness of outreach activities
	Establishment of a strategy to support efforts to achieve gender equality	Implementation of the enhanced Secretariat-wide gender equality strategy
Performance management	Mandatory performance management training introduced in 2011 and updated in 2015	Implementation of proposed changes outlined in section III.B.3 of the present report
	E-performance tool in Inspira completed and deployed throughout the Organization in April 2012	
	Inclusion of 100 per cent target for performance management compliance in the senior managers' compact in 2014	

Area	*Activities/milestones*	*Next steps*
	Development of performance management reform proposals following consultations, review of best practice and lessons learned from the justice system from 2012 to 2016	
Learning and career development	Learning management system piloted in early 2012 New learning and career support strategy developed in 2014	Continue deployment of learning management system to all entities in the Secretariat
		Ensure the learning management system can capture learning activities, including the e-learning content of mandatory courses, substantive content courses, language courses and language exams
		Continue review and revision of learning and development programmes in line with the key elements of the new learning and career support strategy
Work/life issues	Pilot of a revised policy on flexible working arrangements carried out during the period from November 2011 to December 2014. Lessons learned used to develop a revised policy	Implement revised policy on flexible working arrangements and related support tools
The way forward: the evolving human resources management framework	Further develop the human resources management framework built on the following three themes: (a) managing talent; (b) delivering human resources services; and (c) supporting the shaping of the organizational culture	Present to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session an updated integrated human resources management framework for the Organization

III. Human resources management reform

A. Contractual framework initiatives

1. Contractual reform

Background, progress made and imperatives

11. As set out in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Investing in people", one of the major objectives of human resources management reform was to bring about a truly integrated, field-oriented and global workforce. A major obstacle to achieving that objective was the wide range of contractual arrangements, with different conditions of service. Prior to 1 July 2009, there were three different series of the Staff Rules (100, 200 and 300 series), with nine different contract types. While the 100 and 200 series of the Staff Rules provided generally for similar conditions of service, the 300-series appointments of limited duration used in field operations provided a more limited compensation package and were strictly limited to service in a particular mission.

12. Consistent with the contractual framework adopted by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) (A/60/30, annex IV), the Secretary-General proposed, in his related report (A/63/298), simplified and streamlined contractual arrangements that would better serve operational requirements and ensure transparency, fairness and consistency in the treatment of staff.

13. The General Assembly, in its resolution 63/250, stressed the need for a rationalization of the contractual arrangements used by the United Nations system, which lacked transparency and were complex to administer. The Assembly therefore approved new contractual arrangements, effective 1 July 2009, under a single set of Staff Rules, consisting of the following three appointment types:

(a) A temporary appointment for less than one year, or renewed for one additional year (or, exceptionally, up to a maximum of 729 days) to meet surge needs in the field and needs relating to special projects;

(b) A fixed-term appointment, which could be renewed for any period of up to five years at a time;

(c) A continuing appointment, which would be open-ended.

Temporary appointment

14. The introduction of temporary appointments has provided flexibility in the Organization's response to evolving organizational needs, including surge, start-up, emergency and project requirements without long-term obligations. The 364-day limitation on the use of temporary appointments for work not related to field operations or special projects within finite periods is considered too restrictive by some Departments and offices, which would prefer to have the flexibility to meet certain temporary needs beyond 364 days.

Fixed-term appointment

15. A contractual review of staff members holding 300-series appointments of limited duration in the field was conducted pursuant to the introduction of the new set of Staff Rules, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 63/250. A total of 3,620 internationally recruited staff members in peacekeeping operations and special political missions were given fixed-term appointments, with service limited to their specific missions, until such time as they had completed a competitive process culminating in a review by a central review body. With the introduction of the staff selection system in April 2010, internationally recruited staff members in United Nations field operations were integrated into the global Secretariat's staff selection system, ensuring common standards in the recruitment of all staff members at Headquarters and in the field.

16. Staff members previously serving under the 200 series of the Staff Rules were also reappointed on fixed-term appointments under the new Staff Rules. The fixed-term appointments granted to staff members under the former 200 series of the Staff Rules were limited to service in a department or office at the levels at which the staff members were serving, until such time as they had gone through a competitive process culminating in a review by a central review body.

2. Continuing appointment review

Background, progress made and imperatives

17. The Organization conducted the first annual review, for 2012, which commenced on 1 August 2013 and concluded on 30 September 2014. The number of continuing appointments granted were 2,339 for staff in the Professional and higher categories and the Field Service category and 560 for staff members in the General Service and related categories. Table 2 below shows the breakdown of the number of staff members reviewed, the number of the continuing appointments available and the number of continuing appointments granted.

Table 2
First annual continuing appointments review (2012)

Category	*Number of staff members reviewed*	*Number of continuing appointments available for award*	*Number of continuing appointments awarded*
Professional and higher categories and Field Service category	2 432	3 342	2 339
General Service and related categories	764	558	560

18. The second annual review, for the year 2013, which is currently under way, is expected to be completed by 30 November 2016. The maximum number of continuing appointments that can be granted is 1,660 for the Professional and higher categories and the Field Service category and 244 for the General Service and related categories. Table 3 below shows the status of the review.

Table 3
Second annual continuing appointments review (2013)

Category	*Number of staff members under review*	*Number of continuing appointments available for award*	*Number of continuing appointments awarded*
Professional and higher categories and Field Service category	3 285	1 660	Under determination
General Service and related categories	1 022	244	Under determination

3. Harmonization of conditions of service

Background, progress made and imperatives

19. Prior to the harmonization of conditions of service in the field in 2011, field missions were designated as either "established" (family) or "special" (non-family) missions. The designation of non-family field missions was made for administrative and operational reasons and was not related to the security level at the location. For staff members of other United Nations offices, agencies, funds and programmes, the designation of a duty station as "family" or "non-family" was based upon the security level at the location. A number of duty stations that were considered family duty stations for staff members of the United Nations offices, agencies, funds and programmes were considered non-family for Secretariat field mission staff, leading to different treatment. More than 90 per cent of internationally recruited staff members in United Nations field operations, serving at non-family duty stations,

were separated for prolonged periods of time from their families and without compensation for having to maintain a separate, second household. In addition, the compensation package for mission staff was between 30 and 40 per cent lower than that for field staff of the United Nations offices, agencies, funds and programmes at the same location. International vacancy rates for mission staff averaged 26 per cent, with an annual turnover rate in 2007 of 29 per cent for staff in the Professional and higher categories.

20. In an effort to improve conditions of service for staff members in the Field Service category, to meet the needs of an increasingly field-based Organization, ensure equitable treatment of staff members and attract and retain high-quality personnel in the field, the Secretary-General, in his report on the harmonization of conditions of service (A/65/305/Add.1, sect. II), expressed his support for the recommendations of ICSC to harmonize the designation of mission duty stations as family or non-family on the basis of a security assessment, to introduce an additional hardship allowance for staff members serving at non-family duty stations and to establish a framework for rest and recuperation travel. The recommendations of the Commission to harmonize conditions of service of staff members in the field were approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/248 on the United Nations common system.

21. Following the adoption of General Assembly resolution 65/248, effective 1 July 2011, the designation of mission duty stations as family or non-family was harmonized with that of the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes on the basis of security considerations. As a result, as of that date, the status of 39 duty stations in peacekeeping operations and special political missions was changed from non-family to family, increasing the proportion of mission staff members assigned to family duty stations to 35 per cent, up from 10 per cent prior to July 2011. The designation of duty stations as family or non-family by ICSC has brought equity to the treatment of staff members of the United Nations common system at the same duty station.

22. An additional non-family hardship allowance for staff members assigned to non-family duty stations was also introduced on 1 July 2011. The additional allowance has enhanced the incentive for staff members to serve at non-family duty stations, as it compensates staff for the additional costs associated with service at such duty stations. The turnover rate for internationally recruited staff members at such duty stations has decreased from 9.4 per cent for the period from 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2012 to 8.1 per cent for the period from 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2013, and a further decrease in the turnover rate has been observed in subsequent years. The allowance has, however, posed a challenge in the case of some family duty stations. Since the determination of a duty station as family or non-family is now made on the basis of security concerns alone, some staff members serving at family duty stations that lack adequate schooling, housing and/or medical facilities choose not to bring their families to that duty station. Those staff members are more motivated to move to a non-family duty station, because they perceive that they are, de facto, separated from their families and incurring expenditures for dual households without the benefit of the additional non-family hardship allowance.

23. The rest and recuperation designations and cycles for field missions have also been harmonized with those of the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes,

in line with the rest and recuperation framework set out in annex XI to the report of ICSC (A/65/30), ensuring the standardization of the cycles among United Nations common system staff and leading, therefore, to greater transparency and equity.

4. United Nations common system salaries and allowances

Background, progress made and imperatives

24. Following the adoption of resolution 70/244, by which the General Assembly approved a number of changes to the United Nations common system of salaries and allowances, work commenced on preparations for the implementation of changes to the compensation package for internationally recruited staff members. This included the development of specifications for submission to the vendor on the required changes to the Organization's enterprise resource planning system, Umoja, and the development, consultation and promulgation of amendments to the Staff Regulations, provisional Staff Rules and revisions to administrative issuances.

25. Amendments to staff regulation 5.2 on accelerated home leave and annex IV to the Staff Regulations relating to the repatriation grant, as approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/256, were promulgated effective 1 July 2016. The amended Staff Rules were also promulgated provisionally, effective 1 July 2016, to reflect changes relating to the non-family service allowance, settling-in grant, repatriation grant, accelerated home leave travel and relocation shipment, the implementation of the new mobility incentive and the discontinuance of the non-removal allowance. With respect to the latter two, as indicated in the note by the Secretary-General on the implementation of the new common system compensation package in the Secretariat (A/70/896), owing to technical and operational constraints, the actual implementation of the changes will not be completed prior to 1 November 2016 and would require retroactive actions to be processed for additional payments and recoveries, as appropriate.

26. It is proposed that the implementation of the unified base/floor salary scale structure, the new periodicity of step increments, the discontinuation of accelerated step increments and the introduction of the new dependent spouse allowance and the single parent allowance be delayed until 1 September 2017, as explained in the note by the Secretary-General (A/70/896, para. 14).

27. Notwithstanding the proposed changes to the implementation dates, training has commenced for stakeholders, including human resources practitioners in field operations and offices away from Headquarters, on the key elements of the new package. In addition, the Secretary-General has also undertaken a comprehensive communication initiative targeted at internationally recruited staff members and developed a dedicated webpage on iSeek that features all available resources associated with the new common system of salaries and allowances, including implementation timelines and a link to the ICSC benefits calculator.

5. Conclusions: contractual framework initiatives

28. Prior to the implementation of the streamlined contractual arrangements and harmonization of conditions of service, the three different series of the Staff Rules with different conditions of service created inequities in compensation and job tenure for staff members and confusion among them as to the differences in their appointment types and conditions of service. The new contractual arrangements

under the single set of Staff Rules and the harmonized conditions of service provide clarity, transparency and fairness for all staff members and have also enhanced the Organization's ability to attract and retain staff members for service in the field. This is reflected in the reduction of the vacancy rate for posts that are subject to international recruitment in peacekeeping operations and special political missions, from 32.5 per cent as at 30 June 2008 to 21.1 per cent as at 30 June 2016.

29. The single set of Staff Rules with common conditions of service has further streamlined the administration of contracts and enhanced consistency in the application of the Staff Rules and administrative issuances. The introduction of the single set of Staff Rules was particularly important in the context of the development and implementation of Umoja, as it eliminated the need to develop separate processes for the wide range of different rules, appointment types, allowances and benefits under the three different series of Staff Rules previously in use. In addition, the streamlining of contractual arrangements and harmonization of conditions of service in the field have eliminated major barriers to the movement of staff members between Headquarters and the field. These are fundamental elements in the efforts to facilitate mobility and achieve the objective of integrating Headquarters and the field into one global Secretariat.

30. At present, the Secretary-General does not propose any changes to the contractual arrangements. However, depending on the ICSC review of its contractual framework, adjustments may be proposed in the future in the light of the lessons learned. Furthermore, following the implementation of the new United Nations common system compensation package and its review by ICSC, adjustments to the conditions of service of staff members in the field may be proposed.

B. Talent management framework and initiatives

31. The talent management framework developed at the United Nations was introduced in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Investing in people" (A/61/255) and focused on the integration of four core areas: workforce planning; staffing and recruitment; performance management; and learning and career development. By integrating these four areas in a comprehensive and more coordinated manner, the Organization would be better able to attract and manage a global, dynamic, adaptable and engaged workforce to carry out the Organization's evolving mandates.

1. Workforce planning

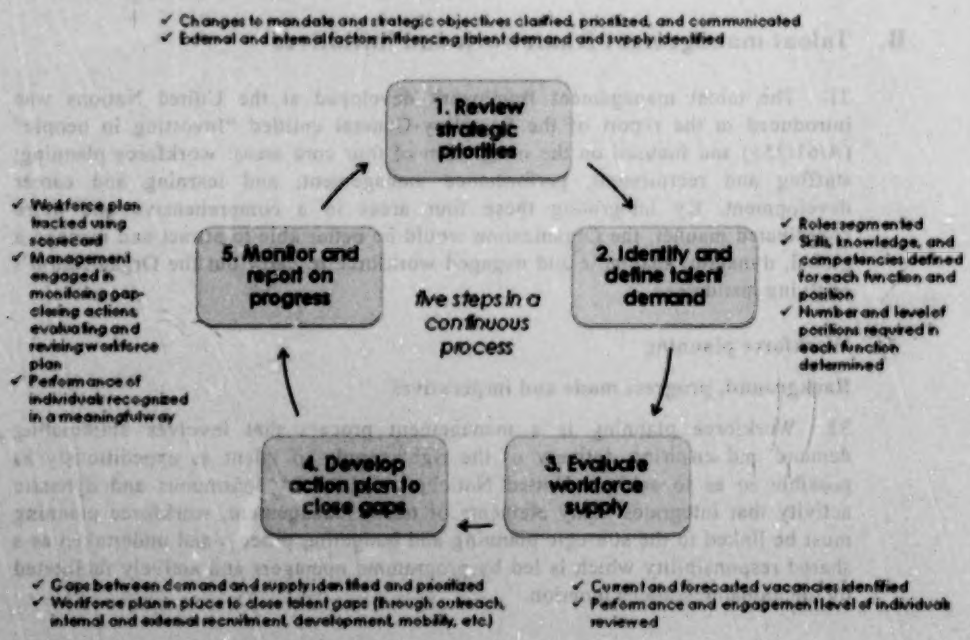
Background, progress made and imperatives

32. Workforce planning is a management process that involves anticipating demand and ensuring delivery of the right supply of talent as expeditiously as possible so as to achieve United Nations mandates. A continuous and dynamic activity that integrates many elements of talent management, workforce planning must be linked to the strategic planning and budgeting process and undertaken as a shared responsibility which is led by programme managers and actively facilitated by the human resources function.

33. Following the adoption of General Assembly resolution 68/252, much progress has been made in developing a robust and comprehensive workforce planning system, through a phased approach, as summarized in the annex to the present report.

34. In 2014, the Secretary-General established a workforce planning advisory group, including representatives from various departments and offices. A five-step methodology was developed (as illustrated in figure I below) and subsequently tested in the Medical Services Division of the Office of Human Resources Management. In 2015, a Workforce Planning User Guide with detailed guidance, checklists and worksheet templates designed to support implementation of the five-step model was developed and piloted in field operations (as noted in A/70/749, annex IX, para. 27). The Department of Field Support also launched an online workforce planning training programme as part of a "fundamentals of field HR" certification programme to build capacity for implementation of the new methodology. Several field operations, including the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe, Uganda, have undertaken workforce planning pilot projects consistent with the new methodology and in connection with civilian staffing reviews, 14 of which were completed as of 31 December 2015. The methodology has proved to be flexible and adaptable, as projects undertaken over the past two years have yielded many valuable insights and benefits, as attested, for example, by right-sizing the organization, shifting the staffing mix in line with civilian staffing review recommendations to nationalizing positions, and identifying areas in which to focus scarce learning and development resources.

Figure I
Five-step workforce planning methodology


✓ Changes to mandate and strategic objectives clarified, prioritized, and communicated
✓ External and internal factors influencing talent demand and supply identified
1. Review strategic priorities
2. Identify and define talent demand
✓ Roles segmented
✓ Skills, knowledge, and competencies defined for each function and position
✓ Number and level of positions required in each function determined
3. Evaluate workforce supply
✓ Current and forecasted vacancies identified
✓ Performance and engagement level of individuals reviewed
4. Develop action plan to close gaps
✓ Gaps between demand and supply identified and prioritized
✓ Workforce plan in place to close talent gaps (through outreach, internal and external recruitment, development, mobility, etc)
5. Monitor and report on progress
✓ Workforce plan tracked using scorecard
✓ Management engaged in monitoring gap-closing actions, evaluating and revising workforce plan
✓ Performance of individuals recognized in a meaningful way
five steps in a continuous process

35. Further to the development of the workforce planning methodology, the main goals of the next phase are to (a) strengthen workforce planning at the entity level; (b) implement a workforce planning approach focused on job networks; and (c) enhance integration between workforce planning and other talent management processes, such as outreach, recruitment and career development. The Office of Human Resources Management, working in partnership with the HR community, will provide guidance, training, and analytical and oversight support to promote development and implementation of workforce plans. Various HR reports are being developed to support workforce planning at both the entity and job network levels.

2. Staff selection and recruitment

Background, progress made since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 68/265, and imperatives

36. The Organization has made progress in improving staff selection and recruitment, including through the implementation of the new staff selection and managed mobility system, improvements to the young professionals programme, the development of a holistic Secretariat-wide strategy for achieving gender equality by 2030, the introduction of a new assessment approach which will greatly reduce recruitment timelines and the identification of a mechanism for promoting career development for staff members in the General Service and related categories.

(a) Recruitment timelines and assessments

37. Under the current staff selection system (ST/AI/2010/3), for positions advertised for 60 days in Inspira in 2015 (as shown in table 4), the recruitment process in non-field duty stations took an average of 239 days, from the initiation of a job opening to the selection of a candidate. The length of the recruitment process was due primarily to the fact that 115 days (48 per cent of the total) were required to screen, assess and recommend candidates, an undertaking that is carried out through the hiring managers. The delay in this step has been attributed to the number of applications for job openings, which has steadily increased since the launch of Inspira in April 2010. The increase in the number of applications has placed a significant burden on the hiring managers in the recruitment process, as they are required to review manually all Inspira applications submitted by each applicant and then establish long- and shortlists of candidates through written assessments and interviews. On average, for each non-field job opening advertised, hiring managers are required to review from 200 to 400 applications for positions at the P-3 level and up to 800 for positions at the P-4 level.

38. For field operations, for the 2015-2016 support account budget period, recruitment took, on average, 69 days and 189 days for "recruit from roster" and "position-specific" job openings, respectively. Similarly, for non-field entities, about 45 per cent of the timelines were dedicated to the screening and assessment of candidates by the hiring managers.

Table 4
Staffing timeline (including both roster and non-roster selections)
(Days)

Step	*Target*	*2013*	*2014*	*2015*
1. Job requisition approval	2	4	4	5
2. Job posting request approval	2	2	2	2
3. Job opening building finalization	8	11	8	12
4. Job opening detail approval	2	7	7	7
5. Pre-job posting	9	6	6	6
6. Job posting	60	52	50	49
7. Initial human resources eligibility assessment	5	13	10	7
8. Recommendation of candidates	40	108	108	115
9. Status review	3	6	6	6
10. Central Review Board endorsement	7	22	22	30
11. Selection by the head of department/office	5	17	15	14
Total duration of actions within senior managers' compact target of a total of 143 days	**143**	**239**	**227**	**239**
Total duration of actions within 120-day target mandated by the General Assembly (actions 7-11)	**120**	**157**	**150**	**158**

Note: The table includes job openings starting at the P-3 through the D-2 levels; and Offices away from Headquarters and regional commissions at all duty stations, except tribunals. With regard to step-related calculation: for each step, the days taken by each job opening for which that step was carried out were summed (numerator) and that sum was divided by the number of job openings for which that step was carried out (denominator). Job openings for which a particular step was not undergone were not counted. Therefore, the total duration for each year is not computed as the sum of the days required for each step.

39. With the goal of reducing the recruitment timeline, particularly the time taken by hiring managers to recommend candidates, the Secretary-General implemented a pilot centrally administered assessment project. That project entailed the introduction of an unproctored Internet-based preselection test for eligible candidates for specific job openings within the Management and Administration Network (MAGNET). As part of the pilot project, the candidates screened in by Inspira on the basis of eligibility requirements were invited to the preselection test. Those candidates who passed the preselection test had their suitability screened by the hiring managers. Those candidates who passed the suitability screening were further assessed by hiring managers through tests of substantive knowledge and/or competency-based interviews. Through this approach, the number of applicants who had to be reviewed by hiring managers was reduced by 50 per cent before long- and shortlists of candidates were established, and the time taken to recommend candidates (step 8 in table 4) was thus cut down by a significant margin. Furthermore, the approach has exerted a positive impact on the overall recruitment timeline.

40. According to the feedback received from the hiring managers, introducing preselection tests reduced the time required to evaluate a large number of applicants by approximately 50 per cent compared with manual reviews of applicants' personal history profiles, as submitted through Inspira. Close to two thirds of the test takers

also provided feedback, through the post-test surveys, reporting that the tests had been fair and relevant to the positions for which they had applied.

41. The Secretary-General plans to expand the use of Internet-based preselection tests, as their use has proved most effective when applied to job openings drawing a high volume of applicants. This assessment approach is currently being applied to the job openings within the new staff selection and managed mobility system under administrative instruction ST/AI/2016/1. As more job networks are rolled out under the new staff selection and managed mobility system, this assessment approach will become standard practice with regard to such job networks. For job networks that continue to fall under the provisions of administrative instruction ST/AI/2010/3, the Office of Human Resources Management, at the request of hiring managers, provides assistance in utilizing this approach for the job openings that attract a high volume of applicants. In this regard, the Secretary-General plans to explore the possibility of expanding the role of recruiters by increasing their involvement in the screening and assessment of applicants for job networks that are still under the provisions of administrative instruction ST/AI/2010/3. The Secretary-General expects that the expanded use of preselection tests could reduce the length of the recruitment timeline by an estimated 30 days.

42. The Secretary-General has also taken additional steps to address delays in the recruitment process encompassing, among others, an in-depth review of the business process, an analysis of recruitment timeline data included in the human resources management scorecard, monthly meetings with executive offices in client departments and offices where recruitment-related issues and delays are discussed, and monthly workshops with hiring managers on the recruitment process.

43. In order to further reduce the time needed to recruit, the Secretary-General requests the General Assembly to reduce the standard posting period for position-specific job openings from 60 to 30 days for the Professional and higher categories. Through application of the reduced posting period to the recruitment timelines for 2015, as presented in table 4, the overall timeline will be reduced to 209 days compared with 239 days (approximately an 8 per cent reduction). Currently, field missions advertise position-specific job openings for 30 days only, which has not been an impediment to attracting suitable candidates. It is therefore highly unlikely that a shorter posting period would affect the ability of potential candidates to identify career opportunities and apply for jobs at the United Nations owing to the fact that applicants, regardless of their physical location, have access to posted job openings through Inspira, which sends job alerts automatically (through a notification mechanism) to applicants based on their preferences. Applicants are empowered to choose a convenient time during the posting period for submitting their applications. Data collected since the launch of Inspira in 2010 have demonstrated that regardless of the length of the posting period, the majority of applicants choose to apply either at the beginning or at the end of the posting period, with more applying during the first half of the posting period than during the second half. The reduced posting period, combined with the reduced time for the recommendation of candidates, as described in paragraph 40 above, is expected to reduce the length of the overall recruitment timeline by at least 25 per cent (60 days), which will bring the timeline considerably closer to the target.

44. In addition, in order to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the recruitment process as well as the fairness, consistency and validity of assessment

for the General Service and related categories, the Secretary-General has also launched the global general service test for recruitment for positions in those categories. The test, which is computer-based, assesses cognitive and social abilities while at the same time avoiding gender or cultural biases. It constitutes a consistent testing method for the General Service and related categories across the Organization.

(b) New staff selection and managed mobility system

45. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 68/265 on the mobility and career development framework (in which the Assembly took note of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Towards a global, dynamic and adaptable workforce: mobility" (A/68/358)), the Secretariat commenced the phased implementation of the new staff selection and managed mobility system for the Political, Peace and Humanitarian Network (POLNET) on 1 January 2016. Detailed updates on the implementation of the new staffing system are provided in addendum 1 to this report (A/71/323/Add.1).

(c) Young professionals programme

Background, progress made since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 65/247, and imperatives

46. In its resolution 65/247, the General Assembly approved a new young professionals programme designed to facilitate the influx of young, diverse talent with fresh ideas demonstrating responsiveness to the needs of the twenty-first century. Additionally, it would enable the Organization to create a pool of dynamic, adaptable, diverse and engaged young professionals, who would be motivated to achieve their full potential, which in turn would strengthen middle and senior management in the medium and long term.

47. In his report A/65/305/Add.4, the Secretary-General outlined a phased implementation plan for the young professionals programme. The young professionals programme examination, as envisioned under phase one of the programme's implementation plan, has been fully developed and established. As planned, the Office of Human Resources Management is now implementing phase two, entailing changes to the programme examination, as outlined below.

48. Pursuant to the request of the General Assembly in its resolution 67/255 on human resources management, the Secretary-General has conducted a comprehensive review of the method and format of the young professionals programme examination and is proposing a number of changes aimed at ensuring that the examination is conducted in the most efficient, effective and equitable manner possible, which would yield further progress in achieving geographical and gender balance, as well as in rejuvenating the staff of the Secretariat.

49. Since the launch of the young professionals programme in 2011, significant progress has been made, in particular in the areas of the application, screening and examination process, career support and outreach. Through Inspira, a much larger volume of applicants for admission to the programme is handled effectively within a shorter time frame. Members of the specialized boards receive training on exam development based on industry standards, to ensure that exam contents are valid and aligned with the needs of each job family. All interviews are conducted remotely through videoconferencing or teleconferencing, which has reduced the cost of travel.

50. Once on board, successful candidates participate in a one-week induction programme and are offered the opportunity to participate in a mentoring programme as well. Targeted outreach activities utilizing web-based communication and social media tools have helped in reaching potential applicants, thereby increasing the number of applications for the programme.

51. Building on these advances and improvements associated with the young professionals programme, the Secretary-General has now begun implementing various elements for phase two of the implementation plan, as provided in document A/65/305/Add.4.

52. Planned enhancements of the 2017 programme are aimed at increasing the accessibility of the exam, further reducing the duration of the examination cycle and maximizing the likelihood that successful candidates will be placed against vacant P-1/P-2 positions. These changes will be introduced on a smaller scale for some of the young professionals programme examinations to be held in 2017, so as to assess their impact before scaling up to all examination-related areas. The planned enhancements include:

(a) Designing the examination by job network rather than by specific job family, beginning with POLNET, in order to provide successful candidates with a wider range of opportunities and greater career flexibility;

(b) Offering the written part of the examination through an online testing platform accessible from any location so as to increase its accessibility to eligible applicants;

(c) Updating the written part of the examination through the introduction of a general test of cognitive and social abilities as the general paper, and a test on substantive knowledge of subjects relevant to the specific job network, serving as the specialized paper;

(d) Extending the period of time during which successful candidates for the young professionals programme may remain on the roster, from two to three years, in consideration of the resources invested in its establishment;

(e) (Proposed) removal of those candidates who have been on the legacy rosters for more than seven years, which would result in the elimination of the legacy rosters in their entirety by December 2018. In this regard, under the national competitive recruitment examinations), rosters were open indefinitely and, as at 1 August 2016, a total of 74 candidates — representing 34 Member States in 19 job families, including 8 candidates who had placed their roster membership on hold — remained unplaced from the legacy rosters of those examinations. The Secretariat will continue its efforts to reduce the number of active candidates on the legacy rosters until 2018, through a combination of placements and removals from the roster, following an indication from candidates no longer interested in remaining on the roster;

(f) Introducing more flexibility in respect of offering an on-demand young professionals programme examination for smaller job families. Currently, the Office of Human Resources Management and substantive departments and offices are conducting full-scale young professionals programme examinations for each featured job family under the same cycle, regardless of the number of existing positions in the given job family. However, some job families, such as those

offering jobs in graphic design, photography, geographic information systems, architecture, nursing and radio production (in specific languages), have very few positions at the P-2 level available under the young professionals programme and these positions can be filled only by candidates with specific skills and knowledge. The young professionals programme examinations in those job families are linked to the same cycle duration as examinations for larger job families and often result in the generation of a list of successful candidates whose number is considerably in excess of the number of available positions to be filled. The Secretary-General therefore plans to hold competitive examinations in job families with only very few anticipated openings on a more flexible and demand-driven basis, independent of the overall young professionals programme examination process and timeline. Such examinations can be held more expeditiously and can ensure more flexible candidate selection results.

(d) Career opportunities for staff members in the General Service and related categories

Background and imperatives

53. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 33/143 of 20 December 1978, the movement of staff from the General Service and related categories to the Professional category has been effected on the basis of competitive methods of selection established by the Secretary-General, commonly referred to as the G-to-P examinations. This has provided staff members in the General Service and related categories with a limited opportunity for career progression and growth, with an initial cap of not more than 30 per cent of total posts available for appointments, and reduced to 10 per cent in recent years, as provided by the Assembly.

54. Recognizing these challenges, the Staff-Management Committee established a working group on the career development of the General Service and related categories comprising representatives of both staff and management, tasked with identifying and reviewing issues related to career development of staff members in the General Service and related categories within the United Nations Secretariat and making recommendations through the Staff-Management Committee to the Secretary-General on opportunities for career and staff development. At the conclusion of a year-long review by the working group, concrete recommendations were made, which were submitted to the Committee in Vienna in April 2016. The Committee endorsed the recommendations, noting that some would require the approval of the General Assembly. The Secretary-General agreed that the recommendations would be submitted to the Assembly through their inclusion in the report of the Secretary-General on the overview of human resources management reform, highlighting the findings of the working group.

55. A survey conducted by the working group demonstrated that 74 per cent of staff in the General Service and related categories who had participated in the survey met the educational requirements for entry into the Professional category. The limitation on recruitment, irrespective of the individual qualifications and merits of staff members in the General Service and related categories, has continued to have a negative impact on the motivation of those staff members. The United Nations funds, programmes and agencies have no similar restriction, which disadvantages the Secretariat when competing to attract and retain qualified staff members in those categories. Therefore, the Secretary-General considers it

necessary to revisit the existing limiting provisions to enable the Organization to fully utilize the skills and potential, and maintain the productivity and motivation, of staff members in the General Service and related categories.

56. The existing provisions on eligibility for, and recruitment of staff members in the General Service and related categories to, the Professional category outside of the G-to-P mechanism are at variance with the long-standing principle of equal treatment underpinning the United Nations staff selection system, as recently reiterated by the General Assembly in paragraph 10 of its resolution 68/265. In that resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to give equal treatment to internal and external candidates when considering applications for vacancies. The Secretary-General is of the opinion that the principle of equal treatment cannot be fully achieved without the revision of the provisions related to the movement of staff members in the General Service and related categories to the Professional category. On reviewing the eligibility (based on minimum academic, language and experience requirements) of internal and external applicants, the Secretary-General ensures meticulously that all applicants meet the stipulated basic requirements for the positions, yet is at the same time required to eliminate any applicant who is currently serving in the General Service and related categories by virtue of his or her status. The Secretary-General is convinced that the competitive methods of selection should be applied through the review and assessment machinery for assessing suitability as opposed to eligibility. It should be noted that such a restriction has been lifted with regard to locally recruited staff members in the General Service and related categories in field operations who are applying for National Professional Officer positions. The adoption of this measure would therefore ensure consistency and standardization within the Secretariat as well.

57. With regard to suitability and ensuring that there is a consistent method for assessing each applicant in the context of a particular job opening, the introduction of competitive standardized assessments and a centralized selection decision-making process has begun to yield concrete results akin to those witnessed by the Organization through administering the young professionals programme examinations and other competitive tests. Going forward, the Secretary-General proposes that once the eligibility of a staff member in the General Service or a related category has been determined, he or she would be evaluated and assessed on the basis of his or her merits on an equal footing with all other applicants and in accordance with the principle of equal treatment, as requested by the General Assembly in paragraph 10 of its resolution 68/265. If he or she was successful in the competitive standardized assessment process and was selected for a job opening in the Professional category, then he or she would be recruited to the Professional category, with due regard to gender and geographical representation and candidates under the young professionals programme. The Secretary-General is of the view that this measure would increase the number of career opportunities for highly qualified staff in the General Service and related categories, promote inclusivity and diversity, enhance productivity and motivate staff members, while at the same time encouraging continuous learning and long-term career development.

58. In the event that the General Assembly endorses the proposal regarding application of staff members in the General Service and related categories for positions in the Professional category, the Secretary-General requests the Assembly to further endorse the removal of the G-to-P element from the young professionals programme so that the positions earmarked for the programme will be filled

exclusively by successful candidates from unrepresented or underrepresented Member States. The Secretary-General shall report to the Assembly on an annual basis regarding trends in the process of recruitment of staff members from the General Service and related categories to the Professional category.

(e) Outreach

Background, progress made and imperatives

59. The Organization continues to direct significant outreach efforts towards both unrepresented and underrepresented Member States through the dedicated unit established in 2008 within the Office of Human Resources Management. Information on geographical representation is contained in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics" (A/71/360). With regard to field missions, outreach efforts have continued to target troop- and police-contributing countries.

60. For the period 2013-2016, outreach efforts have included missions to individual countries, particularly unrepresented and underrepresented Member States, including both developed and developing country Member States. An outreach mission entails briefing sessions on employment opportunities in the United Nations for potential candidates, including university students; seminars on how to prepare applications for United Nations job openings and guidance on competency-based interviews; and meetings with officials representing Governments, universities and non-governmental organizations. These outreach missions are often undertaken jointly with other United Nations organizations.

61. Other outreach efforts entail the participation of the United Nations in career fairs, including virtual career fairs; use of the United Nations careers portal; utilization of social media tools; and advertising on online professional job websites. The careers portal, which provides comprehensive information on employment and on all job openings in the Secretariat, has proved to be the Organization's primary outreach tool. During the period 2014-2015, the portal recorded a total of over 18 million visits, with over 8 million (45 per cent) representing access from developing countries. The developing countries with the highest number of hits were (in descending order) Kenya, India, Brazil, Indonesia, China, Pakistan, Côte d'Ivoire, Uganda, South Africa, Nigeria, Egypt, the Philippines, Mexico, Turkey, Lebanon, the Republic of Korea, Ethiopia, Thailand and Colombia. As noted, social media and virtual career fairs are also utilized to reach out to nationals of developing countries. The developing countries from which the Organization's social media sites are most frequently accessed include Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Brazil, Cambodia, Colombia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Mexico, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, South Africa, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, the United Arab Emirates and Zambia. Those outreach efforts are undertaken in partnership with other departments and offices, particularly the Department of Field Support, as well as with Member States, universities, professional organizations and non-governmental organizations.

62. To measure the impact of outreach, Inspira captures data on individuals who apply for jobs as a result of outreach efforts. The number of applicants who indicated that they had applied as a result of United Nations outreach activities in 2014 and 2015 totalled, respectively, 25,318 (representing 7.7 per cent of

applications) and 26,274 (8.0 per cent of applications), while an additional 4.6 per cent per year indicated that they had applied as a result of indirect outreach, e.g., by governmental or non-governmental sources or by professional associations that had provided the requisite information.

63. Going forward, to ensure stronger results and impact, outreach initiatives will be strategically aligned with organizational priorities and entity mandates. In this context, the Office of Human Resources Management, will partner closely with departments and offices to develop strategies for meeting their needs for talent, with a particular focus on non- and underrepresentation and gender, including the representation of developing countries. Through enhanced strategic guidance and engagement, outreach will entail working more closely with those entities, as well as other partners, including Member States, universities, professional organizations and non-governmental organizations, to identify networks and sources of potential talent in functional areas. Current talent outreach tools, including a database providing the contacts of partners and multipliers, will be expanded through proactive research and sourcing, with a particular focus on reaching and attracting quality candidates from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States, as well as qualified women candidates. Outreach efforts will focus on following up on potential talent leads derived from relevant networks and other identified sources. Recruiters will be expected to deepen their knowledge of potential and available talent profiles, so as to proactively support entities in meeting their talent needs. This targeted approach will facilitate more effective monitoring and tracking of outreach results.

64. Employer branding can be key to promoting the United Nations as an attractive employer and attracting the right talent for specific needs. While the careers portal has contributed to enhancing the branding of the United Nations as an employer, the Organization will need to strengthen such branding in order to build closer links among talent needs, workforce segments and sources of potential talent.

65. The Organization will monitor and assess the effectiveness of its outreach initiatives and tools on an ongoing basis. Drawing from lessons learned, and internal and external partner feedback, as well as best practice, outreach initiatives will be enhanced and strengthened, as appropriate, so as to ensure effectiveness and context-specific relevance.

(f) Efforts to achieve gender equality

Background, progress made since the adoption of General Assembly resolutions 65/247 and 67/255, and imperatives

66. In its resolution 65/247, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to increase his efforts to attain and monitor the goal of gender equality in the Secretariat, in particular at senior levels, and in that context to ensure that women, especially those from developing countries, were appropriately represented within the Secretariat. In its resolution 67/255, the Assembly expressed serious concern that progress towards the goal of 50/50 gender balance in the United Nations system had remained elusive, and reiterated its requests to the Secretary-General to increase his efforts to attain and monitor the goal of gender equality in the Secretariat.

67. Overall, gender balance has advanced in the United Nations Secretariat only incrementally, by less than 0.5 percentage points per year since 2005. As of 30 June 2015, the proportion of female staff was 34.4 per cent, with women constituting 41.3 per cent of staff in the Professional and higher categories. While gender balance either has been achieved or is getting closer to parity at the P-2 level (56 per cent), the P-3 level (44 per cent) and the P-4 level (38 per cent), significant gaps still remain at the senior leadership level, with the proportion of women being only 27 per cent at the D-2 level, 32 per cent at the D-1 level and 33 per cent at the P-5 level. During the period from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2015, only 25 per cent of applicants for senior positions (at the P-5 through D-2 levels) were women. However, women represented 38 per cent of the selected candidates, which is an indication that an increase in the number of women applicants could positively impact the representation of women in the workforce.

68. The Secretariat continues to partner with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the Department of Field Support on the development of a Secretariat-wide gender equality strategy, focused on increasing the recruitment and retention of women, strengthening career development and promoting a more inclusive organizational culture. The Field Personnel Division of the Department of Field Support conducts outreach with a strong focus on enhancing the attractiveness to women of positions in peacekeeping and special political missions, particularly women from troop- and police-contributing countries.

69. Despite such efforts, the pace of progress has been slow. Therefore, the Secretary-General is putting forward a holistic Secretariat-wide strategy for achieving gender equality at all professional levels by 2030. Pursuant to the adoption by the General Assembly, in its resolution 70/1, of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which set out the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 5 ("Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls"), the United Nations Secretariat must now assume a leadership role in building a workforce that reflects institutionally the type of gender equality that it seeks to witness worldwide. Embodying diversity and inclusion internally is a key requirement for delivering on gender equality mandates to the world.

70. There are currently several important albeit fragmented initiatives under way to enhance gender balance across the Secretariat. With a dedicated team in place to consolidate, coordinate and monitor the implementation efforts, and with due consideration to geographical representation, the Organization's ability to achieve its gender goals with be enhanced. A more holistic approach to talent management, through which gender equality efforts are supported by managers with access to the actual data on gender needed to inform recruitment activities and career development efforts, will strengthen the efforts towards reaching gender equality goals. Furthermore, it is anticipated that many of these measures will have an overall positive spillover effect on other diversity-related goals, e.g., geographical balance, and will thus play a leading role in creating overall diversity and inclusiveness in the workplace. The key elements of this strategy have been endorsed by the Management Committee and a preliminary team has been established to begin operationalization of the measures under each key area.

(g) Use of retired staff members

71. In its decision 51/408 of 4 November 1996, the General Assembly decided that the permissible earnings for retired former staff in receipt of pension benefits should be limited to $22,000, except for language staff, for whom the limit should be $40,000. As stipulated, the provision allows such individuals to rejoin the Secretariat workforce without having to rejoin the pension fund as a contributor when earnings remain below those ceilings. In paragraph (f) of the same decision, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it every two years on all aspects of the use of retired former staff members, including the possible revision of the earnings limits.

72. The General Assembly, in part VI, paragraph 1, of its resolution 57/305 endorsed the recommendation contained in paragraph 10 of the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/57/469), in which the Advisory Committee recommended approval of the Secretary-General's proposal, contained in his report on employment of retired former staff (A/57/413), to set the maximum limit for language staff members at 125 workdays per year, noting that as a result of so doing, it would not be necessary in the future to consider frequent revisions to that limit in order to accommodate cost-of-living adjustments to the daily rate.

73. The limit set by the General Assembly in 1996 for former retired staff members other than former language services staff members corresponds to the lesser of up to six months of cumulative service or $22,000 per annum, which was set on the basis of a maximum of six months at the midpoint of the gross salary for the Professional and higher categories (e.g., for P-4, step VI). The adjustment made in 2006 to the current limit for former language services staff members was an adjustment to the monetary equivalent of up to 125 working days per calendar year at the level at which the individual had separated from service, which represents approximately one half of the 251 workdays per year (excluding 104 weekends and 10 official holidays), and the global financial cap of $40,000 was removed altogether.

74. The current limit of $22,000 for former retired staff members, other than former language services staff members, has not been adjusted in over 20 years and has not kept pace with inflation, thereby limiting the possibility of contracting former retired staff members. At P-4, step VI, the amount of $22,000 has been eroded down to the equivalent of 2.6 months of gross salary, less than half the maximum of six months approved by the General Assembly in 1996. For former retired staff members who separate at higher grade levels, ranging from the P-5 to the D-2 level, the current limit restricts even further the possible duration of their contracting in any given calendar year: for instance, at D-2, step VI, the current ceiling equates to only 1.6 months of gross salary, which represents about one quarter of the maximum of six months approved by the Assembly in 1996.

75. The constraints placed on the Organization by the current earnings' limit are significant, given the benefits that would accrue from the Organization's being able to contract retired former staff members to meet temporary needs. Flexibility with respect to rapid contracting of highly skilled individuals who have the relevant expertise and the required knowledge of the Organization's processes, systems and mandates, and who are readily available for rapid deployment, is particularly important for field operations at the time of start-up, surges and emergency humanitarian crises, as well as for particular specialized projects, or for bridging

short-term gaps when highly skilled and rapidly deployable expertise is required on an urgent basis. This flexibility would also enable the Organization to ensure coverage of vital functions under unexpected or unforeseen circumstances such as extended leave due to illness. Retired former staff members are suited for fulfilment of these particular temporary needs, as experienced by the Organization on a recurring basis, as they constitute a highly qualified and readily available workforce with an interest in taking on such short-term assignments. Further, hiring of retired staff members for temporary needs and for a limited period will have no impact on the career progression of regular staff members or on the recruitment process, as all available positions will have to be filled through the regular established recruitment process.

76. In light of the above, the Secretary-General proposes that the General Assembly approve the setting of the earnings limits for retired staff members in receipt of pension benefits at the monetary equivalent of up to 125 working days per calendar year at the level at which the individual had separated from service: accordingly, the earnings limit would no longer constitute a specific global monetary limit but would instead be fixed as the equivalent of 125 working days of gross salary at the grade and step level at which the individual retired former staff member had separated from the Organization. This approach would yield a more equitable arrangement than that achieved through the establishment of a global ceiling to limit the services of all former retired staff members regardless of the grade and level at which they had separated from the Organization, while providing the Organization with the above-mentioned necessary flexibility in accessing a pool of qualified, readily available and deployable candidates. This would also result in harmonization of the treatment of former retired staff members with that of former language services staff with respect to the earnings limit set for the latter in 2006. Finally, as previously noted by the Advisory Committee in 2006, it would not be necessary to consider frequent revisions in the future.

3. Performance management

Background, progress made since the adoption of General Assembly resolutions 67/255 and 68/252, and imperatives

77. The General Assembly, in paragraph 41 of its resolution 65/247, emphasized that a credible, fair and fully functioning performance appraisal system was critical to effective human resources management and requested the Secretary-General to ensure its rigorous implementation. In paragraphs 15 and 16, respectively, of its resolution 67/255, the Assembly requested that the Secretary-General redouble his efforts to ensure rigorous implementation of the performance management system and that he take corrective measures with regard to the responsibility of second reporting officers for the quality and timeliness of performance appraisals.

78. The Secretary-General, in accordance with these resolutions, has continued to improve and refine the performance management system, while also developing the reform proposal requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 68/252. In that resolution, the Assembly emphasized that the overarching objective of the proposal should be to credibly and effectively measure performance, reward good performance and sanction underperformance, and that it should be easily understood by staff members and management (para. 7); stressed that the sanctioning of underperformance was crucial to ensure the efficient and effective execution of

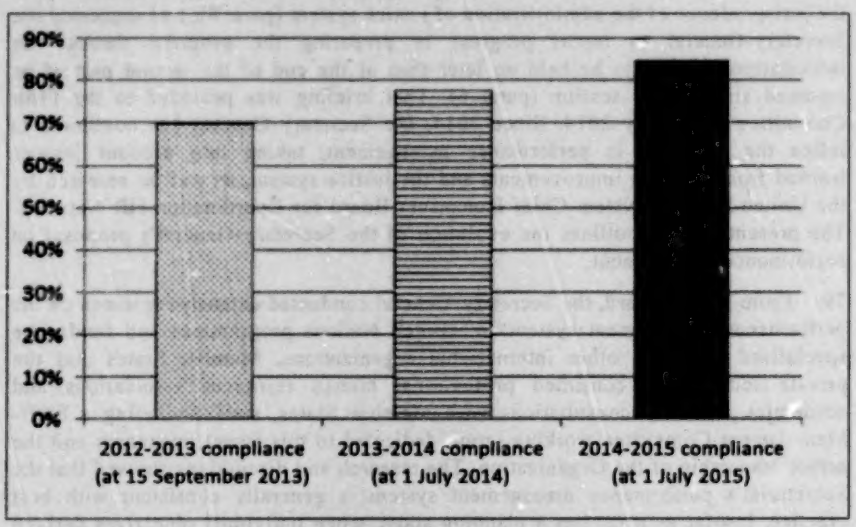
mandates, and urged the Secretary-General to clarify and simplify policies and procedures related to underperformance, bearing in mind the lessons learned from the jurisprudence of the administration of justice system (para. 8); and requested the Secretary-General to report progress in preparing the proposal through an information briefing to be held no later than at the end of the second part of its resumed sixty-eighth session (para. 6). That briefing was provided to the Fifth Committee on 6 May 2014. Since 2014, the Secretary-General has continued to refine the approach to performance management, taking into account lessons learned from ongoing improvements and the justice system, as well as research by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination HR Network. The present section outlines the evolution of the Secretary-General's proposal on performance management.

79. From 2012 onward, the Secretary-General conducted extensive research on the performance management systems of United Nations programmes and funds, the specialized agencies, other international organizations, Member States and the private sector; and consulted professional human resources associations and academics and held consultations with Member States, staff (including a Staff-Management Committee working group dedicated to this issue), managers and the senior leadership of the Organization. The research and discussions showed that the Secretariat's performance management system is generally consistent with best practice, insofar as it (a) has a planning stage, when individual objectives derived from organizational priorities are formulated by the employee and his or her manager; (b) monitors progress throughout the year; and (c) includes an end-of-year assessment. While there are differences among systems (e.g., in rating scales, cycles, evaluation formats and other features), with some organizations with very different areas of work or cultures having unique systems, overall, there were few fundamental differences in the approach or the underlying philosophy.

80. The research therefore indicates that the performance management process used by the Secretariat is not the root cause of the challenges that we face. Rather, improving performance management in the Secretariat requires changing the related culture and behaviours in the Organization. This encompasses not just how staff members are evaluated at the end of the cycle but the broader issue of how staff members are supervised and managed on a daily basis.

81. While the somewhat cumbersome nature of the ePerformance tool has often been blamed for the inability to complete performance documents, improvements in completion rates since 2014 tell a different story, one related to the need for behavioural change. In 2014, in an effort to ensure that all staff received a performance evaluation at the end of the cycle, 100 per cent compliance with the performance management process was included as a target in the senior manager's compact, through which the profile of the issue was thereby raised and senior managers were held accountable for the completion of performance documents in their department or office. Figure II below illustrates the significant improvement in overall compliance rates since the inclusion of performance management as an indicator in the compacts in 2014. At the end of the 2014-2015 cycle, 9 out of 65 Secretariat entities had achieved 100 per cent compliance with the performance management system, whereas in prior years, no entity had achieved 100 per cent compliance.

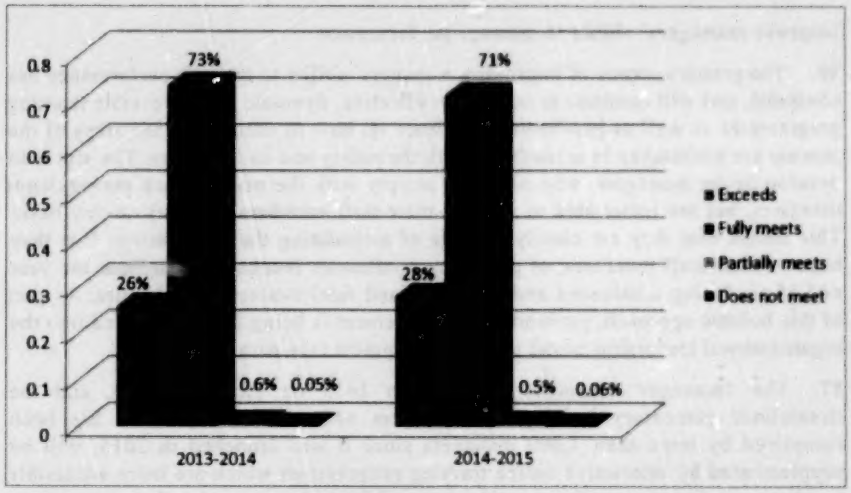
Figure II
Improvements in performance management compliance: 2012-2015



82. While improvements in completion rates at the end of the cycle are a positive development, lessons learned from the justice system and improved monitoring capabilities created through the newly launched performance management dashboard in HR Insight, indicate that each step in the process is not necessarily being completed within the appropriate time frame set for that step. Challenges also remain regarding how performance is managed throughout the year as well as in the final evaluations themselves, even when performance documents are completed by the end-of-cycle deadline. Feedback provided during consultations indicates that there is a perception that senior management does not actively prioritize performance management throughout the year and that managers are not held accountable for the poor management of their staff members.

83. Additionally, concerns have been raised regarding the quality of the final evaluations. Both staff members and hiring managers who may be reading performance evaluations often feel that they do not accurately reflect the performance of staff members or that they are not linked to a sufficient degree to delivery of results that are derived appropriately from strategic frameworks and related planning documents. There is a concern — both real and perceived — that ratings are not applied consistently or objectively in relation to the performance of a staff member, and that the comments in the evaluation may sometimes be inconsistent with the rating or simply non-existent. Many managers have indicated that they fear complaints and accusations of harassment, investigation, rebuttal panels and the justice system, which may induce them to avoid addressing underperformance issues in the evaluations. Data on the number of poor ratings (as shown in figure III below), which were given to less than 1 per cent of staff, and on the number of rebuttals (20 reported for 2013-2014 and 24 for 2014-2015) seem a more accurate reflection of avoidance of addressing underperformance rather than of actual underperformance in the Secretariat.

Figure III
Rating distribution for the Secretariat for the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 cycles



84. The aforementioned challenges all point to a need for change in the culture of the Organization. Experiences of other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes indicate that explicit linkages between various talent management processes, e.g., contract conversion, mobility, recruitment and promotion, are considered to have a positive impact on performance management in the organization. Experience with downsizing and restructuring, particularly in the field, as well as with continuing appointments, has shown that managers and staff members are beginning to take performance management more seriously as a result of the links to contractual arrangements. There is room for further strengthening of the linkages between performance and all aspects of talent management, taking into account the lessons learned on how performance and contractual status have been linked. This having been said, lessons learned have also shown that the Organization needs to be careful in implementing stronger linkages between performance and talent management until staff members and managers have a greater measure of confidence in the accuracy and reliability of performance evaluations. The Ombudsman has noted, for instance, that concerns have been raised by managers and staff during retrenchment exercises which use performance evaluations and ratings that are not considered fair or accurate, or in cases where ratings may not be consistent across different teams (see A/67/172, paras. 115-116). Strengthening the integration of performance and career progression should therefore be phased in over time and adequate preparations must be made to promote greater accuracy and credibility of evaluations before they are used to determine a staff member's upward or lateral mobility.

85. The Secretary-General therefore proposes a two-phased approach to the reform of performance management in which, first, the credibility and reliability of performance evaluations are strengthened and, second, performance becomes an explicit criterion which determines the career progression of staff members and managers. In phase one, which is expected to be implemented between 2017 and

2019, the Secretary-General proposes to focus on three areas for improvement of the accuracy and credibility of performance evaluations.

(a) Improve managers' ability to manage performance

86. The primary means of improving managers' ability to manage performance has consisted, and will continue to consist, in effective, dynamic and accessible learning programmes as well as just-in-time guidance on how to ensure that the steps of the process are undertaken in accordance with the policy and its deadlines. The aim is to develop better managers, who not only comply with the performance management timelines, but are better able to manage their staff members on a day-to-day basis. This means that they are clearly capable of articulating the expectations that they have of their staff members, of providing continuous feedback throughout the year and of producing a balanced and well-reasoned final evaluation in Inspira. As part of this holistic approach, performance management is being fully integrated into the organizational leadership model under development (see para. 114 below).

87. The "manager's toolkit", launched in 2015 on the HR portal, and the streamlined mandatory training for managers and supervisors, which has been completed by more than 3,000 managers since it was launched in 2015, will be supplemented by interactive online training programmes which are more accessible to managers in remote duty stations. In addition, a more detailed manual on performance management, which will be regularly updated in accordance with the lessons learned from the internal justice system, will be made available. A self-paced online programme focused on roles and responsibilities and the performance process is being launched during the current 2016-2017 cycle and integrated into the Global Induction Platform, to ensure that new managers are made aware immediately of their performance management responsibilities.

88. In addition, to centre the focus of managers on the day-to-day management of and engagement with their staff members, the Secretary-General will aim towards simplifying some of the more bureaucratic processes currently associated with performance management. The Secretary-General will work towards a continuous streamlining of the ePerformance module in Inspira so as to reduce the time needed by managers to complete it, thereby allowing them to focus on their ongoing dialogue with staff members. Second reporting officers, for instance, will be required only to approve ratings in Inspira rather than provide written comments. On the other hand, the second reporting officer will be required to prioritize performance management throughout the year by supporting first reporting officers in implementing each step of the performance system in a timely manner, resolving potential disputes between first reporting officers and staff members, and ensuring consistency in ratings. Additionally, to address managers' fear of rebuttals, efforts will be aimed at reducing delays in the rebuttal process, improving the composition of the rebuttal panels and enhancing the training and guidance provided to rebuttal panels throughout the process.

(b) Provide increased human resources expertise and support

89. Feedback from managers indicates that they feel the support they receive when dealing with difficult situations is insufficient. Experience has shown that, in a potential case of underperformance, the timely support of their local human resources practitioners, who have the appropriate expertise and knowledge of the

context, better enables corrective action at the early stages in cases of underperformance. If the situation is not resolved, then several different components of the administration may become involved in the case as it proceeds towards consideration by the justice system. While all parties may collaborate well together, the process can appear disjointed to the manager directly affected.

90. To address these challenges, the Secretary-General will develop a programme designed to enhance the capacity of the human resources community to address performance management issues and concerns as early as possible and consistently across the system and through all stages of the performance process. Capacity-building initiatives will include developing and rolling out "clinics" to address salient issues faced by human resources professionals and managers; training on how human resources staff can use behavioural science interventions to promote greater engagement on performance issues; and targeted virtual training programmes for local human resources staff across the Secretariat on performance management policy and best practice, including with respect to underperformance as well as the health issues that may affect performance. The increased engagement of human resources practitioners with performance management expertise, coupled with enhanced training, is likely to lead to an increase in poor ratings as ratings become more consistent and objective; and an increase in poor ratings may in turn result in an increase in rebuttals, sanctions and actions within the justice system.

(c) Increase the objectivity, transparency and consistency of the performance management system

91. To address the real and perceived inconsistencies in the performance management system, in particular in relation to ratings, there is a need to increase the objectivity, transparency and consistency of the performance management system across the Secretariat for both managers and staff. The Secretary-General proposes to address this by focusing on how the evaluations are finalized and on how senior management guides first — and, particularly, second — reporting officers in calibrating or aligning ratings to ensure consistency across teams, and by sharing more information and data on performance management across the Secretariat.

92. In the current final evaluation form under ePerformance, managers assign ratings and make comments on select individual competencies, which may include managerial competencies for managers. Ratings and comments focus on the development plan and there is an overall set of final comments and a rating. The significant potential for inconsistencies across all of these ratings and comments is sometimes exploited by managers who may wish to make negative comments without assigning a final negative rating which can be rebutted. Given the various parts of the evaluation, the picture that emerges of the staff member's strengths and weaknesses is a fragmented one; at present, those fragments cannot coalesce to provide useful organizational insight into the performance and skills of a staff member which can be utilized to inform workforce planning and learning. Therefore, the final evaluation form will be simplified to encompass a single narrative evaluation, which includes comments on how staff demonstrated all of the core competencies throughout the cycle and on areas for development. For those with managerial responsibilities, a single narrative evaluation of how those responsibilities were fulfilled, together with how all managerial competencies were demonstrated, will be completed. With regard to supplementing the narrative evaluation of the first reporting officer, the Secretary-General will explore the

possibility of creating relevant managerial and subs antive performance indicators. The aim is to incorporate additional quantitative performance indicators in the performance evaluation which can strengthen the objectivity of the first reporting officer's narrative.

93. At the organizational level, the Secretary-General will work with local human resources officers and senior management teams to ensure that the annual senior management meeting on performance is held within each entity in the Secretariat, with a focus on calibrating ratings across and within the department and offices so as to ensure that staff are rated fairly and consistently across different departments and duty stations. A Secretariat-wide end-of-cycle report, to be issued annually on iSeek, will highlight patterns and trends in completion rates, ratings distribution and participation in managerial training. Data sets included in the pilot version of the report issued at the end of the 2014-2015 cycle are included in figures IV and V below, to illustrate the type of issues to be addressed in the report. The availability of such data at the global level annually will help increase understanding and address misperceptions centred around performance management within the Secretariat over time. Through their access to first-hand data, staff and managers will see for themselves how the system becomes more and more balanced and more and more capable of accuracy in its evaluations. In addition, the report and concerns of staff representatives will be discussed annually at the global level within the Staff-Management Committee. This platform will replace the local joint monitoring groups, which do not have access to data at a global level and often experience challenges with respect to bringing together a sufficient number of members so that meetings can be held and local reports finalized.

Figure IV
Compliance with performance management for 2014-2015, by staff category

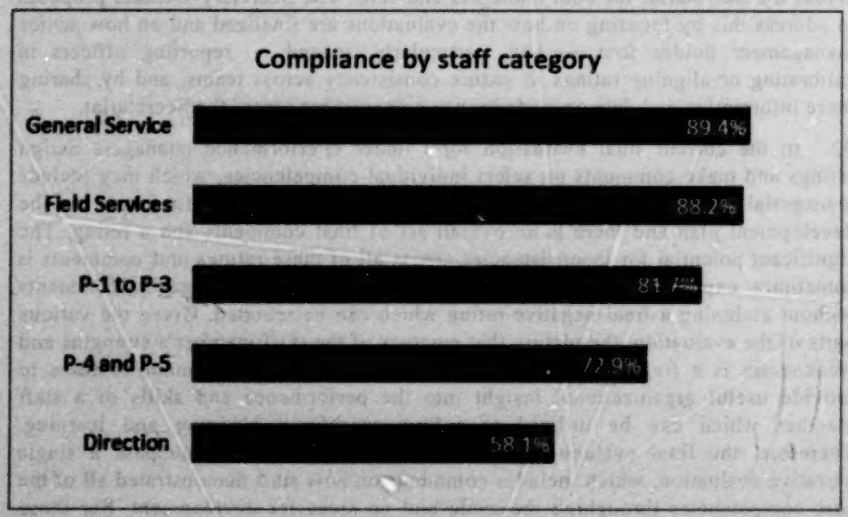
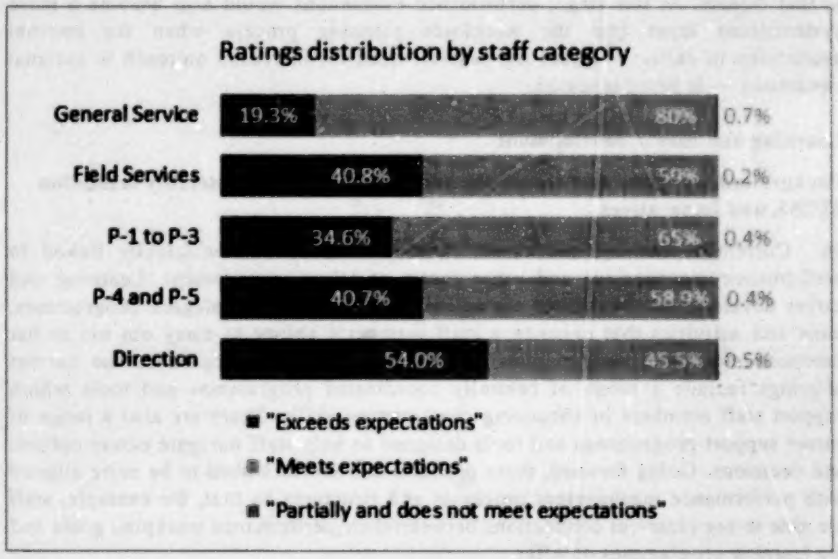


Figure V
Ratings distribution for 2014-2015, by staff category



94. Over time, it is expected that the initiatives undertaken as part of the three-pronged approach in phase one will complement and reinforce each other and result in more accurate evaluations of staff performance, with a stronger description of a staff member's skills, abilities and experience. It is also expected that this will result in greater consistency in ratings distribution across departments and offices and a more balanced distribution across the four different rating levels.[1] As a result, the performance management system will acquire more credibility among managers and staff members, to be tracked through a staff engagement survey (see para. 113 below for further details).

95. The aim of the Secretary-General is to ensure full implementation of these initiatives by the end of 2018. The initial focus on improving the accuracy and credibility of evaluations would also support any potential recommendation of the General Assembly on performance incentives following its review of the studies of the International Civil Service Commission, to be submitted to the Assembly at its seventy-second session (see Assembly resolution 70/244 paras. 23-24). The Secretary-General welcomes the call for performance incentives, which can further enhance the linkages between performance management and talent management. Phase two of the performance reforms would then begin in 2019, involving revision of policies on performance management, staff selection and related areas so as to explicitly include performance as a key criterion for lateral placement under managed mobility and promotion of staff members and any performance incentives recommended by the Assembly. The aim would be to allow hiring managers to use the narrative description of staff members' and managers' performance so as to

[1] The four ratings are "exceeds expectations", "meets expectations", "partially meets expectations" and "does not meet expectations". The last two ratings are combined in figure V on ratings distribution by staff category.

better determine the best fit when considering selection for vacancies or lateral mobility, even if different processes are required for internal and external candidates in that respect. At this stage, performance evaluations would also become a more systematized input into the workforce planning process when the internal availability of skills — versus the possible need for increased outreach to external candidates — is being assessed.

4. Learning and career development

Background, progress made since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 67/255, and imperatives

96. Currently, learning and career development are not sufficiently linked to performance management and other facets of talent management. Learning and career development constitutes a practice area comprising strategies, programmes, tools and activities that enhance a staff member's ability to carry out his or her functions effectively and to plan and enhance career development. The current offerings include a range of centrally coordinated programmes and tools which support staff members in enhancing cross-cutting skills. There are also a range of career support programmes and tools designed to help staff navigate career options and decisions. Going forward, these products and services need to be more aligned with performance management processes and structures so that, for example, staff are able to see clear-cut connections between their performance workplan goals and the learning programmes on offer.

97. In paragraph 20 of its resolution 67/255, the General Assembly welcomed the efforts of the Secretary-General to meet learning and development needs in a cost-effective manner, and encouraged him to take further steps in that regard, including through providing relevant training, and requested him to report thereon to the Assembly at its sixty-ninth session in his next overview report. In paragraph 21 of the same resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to promote e-learning in order to provide equal opportunities for staff to access training, taking into account that e-learning represents a flexible and effective way of delivering some types of learning. The associated progress made is described below.

98. In 2012, the Secretary-General began to explore a new approach to learning and career support in order to make more effective use of resources during a time of financial constraint. Several hurdles were identified, including the need for an oversight body to validate cross-cutting learning and career support priorities and to determine which programmes should be mandatory. It was also clear that learning programmes and tools needed to be made more accessible, especially to staff members in field operations, and that a mechanism was needed for information sharing and collaboration among learning offices to improve learning-related offerings.

99. The Secretariat developed a new Learning and Career Support Strategy to address these challenges. Approved by the Management Committee in June 2014, its key aims are to utilize the Management Committee as an oversight body, and through the establishment of a Secretariat-wide learning and career support group, to ensure better coordination among offices that support learning, increase access to learning and career support for global Secretariat staff, including through new learning technologies, and improve learning and career support options.

100. In addition to ensuring more effective coordination, the Secretariat now provides an online learning advisory service as part of the revised information technology learning portfolio. The service provides departments and offices with guidance on the use of e-learning technologies, instructional design, programmes, platforms and vendors and has reduced the amount of time spent by learning offices in creating tools and programmes on specific substantive or technical topics. At the beginning of 2014, the Secretary-General established the online learning advisory services unit, which helps offices create programmes related, inter alia, to peacekeeping, ethics, corruption prevention, human rights and emergency preparedness.

101. In support of increasing access to learning programmes, the Secretariat now administers all core learning programmes through the enterprise learning management system (LMS) module in Inspira. This registration and hosting platform, for both the centrally coordinated programmes and Umoja learning programmes, is now deployed in all offices away from Headquarters and will be deployed in field duty stations by the end of 2016, enabling improved tracking of learning programme participation.

102. Through the Learning and Career Support Strategy three priority learning areas were identified: management and leadership; core learning, which addresses competencies needed by all staff; and learning associated with organizational change.

(a) Management and leadership

103. In terms of management and leadership programmes, the Secretary-General is increasing access through expanded use of online technologies. This entails revising, for example, the management development programme and the supervisory skills programme, and converting them from in-person workshops to blended programmes with both online and in-person components, which will significantly increase the number of participants each year and reduce the overall cost per participant. Performance management training has been streamlined and improved. In addition, the online manager's toolkit supports managers and leaders in accessing just-in-time resources on a range of topics, ranging from operating norms and policies, to guidance on communication and effective leadership skills. Finally, the new leadership model will provide staff with a communications and learning framework which links the organizational expectations of managers with learning tools provided to support them and the means by which they will be held accountable.

(b) Core learning

104. In terms of core learning, the majority of programmes are now conducted through online conferencing technology or through pre-recorded self-paced learning programmes. This has increased accessibility, enabling staff in major duty stations and remote field locations to secure access to core learning programmes. Overall costs are lower for some programmes because travel expenses are eliminated. In addition, career counselling is now offered through Skype, which allows staff from all duty stations to receive personalized counselling with regard to their applications and on interviewing techniques and other general career-related matters. Furthermore, in 2015, the Office implemented a pilot with an online library site (Lynda.com) which contains thousands of video and e-learning courses covering a wide spectrum of organizational needs. It has been made accessible to staff

worldwide and at this early stage, usage levels are promising. Longer-term use of the site or of similar services is being explored.

105. The Secretary-General has also conducted reviews of programmes to identify how they can better meet the needs of staff in a cost-effective manner, in accordance with paragraph 20 of General Assembly resolution 67/255. For example, a review of the sabbatical leave programme revealed that what participants valued most was the opportunity to engage in dedicated research on a subject that benefited the Organization while enhancing the skills and knowledge of staff members, and that the provision of a stipend and payment of travel expenses were far less important. Thus, in 2015, the sabbatical leave programme and policy were revised, which entailed elimination of the stipends and payment of travel expenses. As a result, the programme can now accommodate a maximum of 30 annual participants instead of 15.

106. Staff member induction had been identified as a key area of core learning that needed improvement, inasmuch as, inter alia, duty stations had been providing inconsistent information to new staff members. Hence, a Global Induction Platform[2] was launched in 2015 to enable new and transferring staff members to procure much-needed information on their roles and functions. It offers a tailored menu of activities, learning programmes and tasks which should be undertaken by staff members, based on their level, role and duty station. As of June 2016, the Platform had 622 registered users globally who had visited the Platform a total of 5,937 times. Usage is expected to increase significantly with the integration of the Inspira module that automates offer letters; and Inspira will provide an automatic direct link to the Platform, as part of the onboarding process.

107. The language and communications programme, also part of core learning, has continued to expand its services. The use of online conferencing technology has steadily increased, enabling more staff in remote duty stations to enhance their language and communication skills. While online platforms are used to support individual language teams, there is a need for a central, comprehensive resource, which will be procured.

108. Launched in 2015, a new language learning advisory service, involving language teachers based in New York, has assisted learning officers in other duty stations in starting or enhancing language programmes. The service has provided guidance on curricula, software and programme operations.

109. A new learning centre opened in May 2016 at the New York duty station. With over 22 classrooms, it provides an improved learning environment for the thousands of staff members who engage in language study each semester. Furthermore, improved training is now available for language staff who specialize in translation and interpretation.

(c) Organizational change

110. The Secretary-General has addressed learning needs as related to organizational change, and specifically as related to the new staff selection and managed mobility system and to Umoja. In the context of the new staff selection and managed mobility system, the Office conducted extensive information sessions for participants

[2] See https://uninduction.parseapp.com/.

included in the first reassignment exercise for POLNET. Those online conferencing sessions enabled live presentations and question-and-answer exchanges. The Office of Human Resources Management also offered online career counselling specifically for POLNET staff so as to ensure that their concerns regarding mobility and career development were addressed in a personalized manner.

111. Global access to standardized duty station guides was enabled in 2015 to ensure that staff can research those duty stations before participating in mobility exercises or applying for posts. Also issued was a guide to employment for the spouses of United Nations staff as a means of providing support to staff and their spouses in relation to their future moves. The Office of Human Resources Management continues to develop plans for addressing the learning and communications needs that will arise in the course of successive job network roll-outs.

112. With reference to Umoja, the Secretariat delivered in-person training and online learning options to staff members, as described in the eighth progress report on the enterprise resource planning project. Plans for transferring responsibility for Umoja from the project team to the "business owners" of core processes, including human resources, have advanced. In this regard, Umoja and the Office of Human Resources Management are developing a mainstreaming plan for Umoja learning. It will be carried out in phases, aligned with other departmental mainstreaming plans and focused on the goal of ensuring that staff members are fully proficient in the use of the system as a means of supporting a more efficient organization.

113. In 2017, the Secretary-General will continue to improve and update the portfolio of learning and career support programmes and tools so as to further strengthen overall support to HR staff members in areas related to talent management and make them more accessible to staff worldwide. Key initiatives will include, inter alia:

(a) A new leadership model which will guide managers and leaders in the areas of organizational expectations, the learning and development options that are available to them, and the measures of accountability to which they will be held;

(b) A stronger focus on easier access to staff members' learning tools and the lowering of learning costs through the use of a new online learning platform and a wider selection of centrally coordinated programmes offered online;

(c) Learning opportunities aimed at helping staff deal with organizational change, in support of the mobility and career development framework and implementation of Umoja;

(d) Implementation of a staff engagement survey in order to monitor staff engagement and determine which challenges should be addressed through change initiatives.

(d) Flexible working arrangements

Background, progress made and next steps

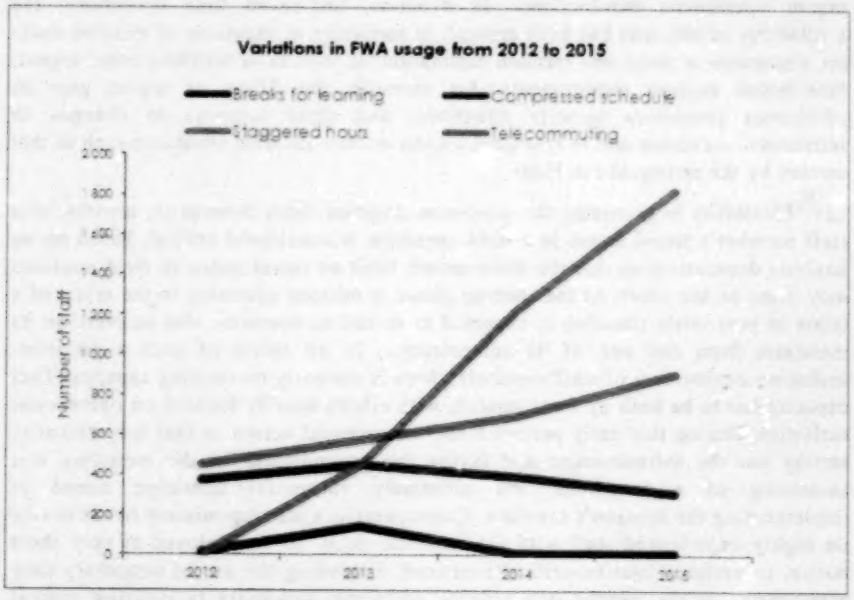
114. Flexible working arrangements (FWA) entail adjustments to normal working hours and work locations, which provide managers and staff with flexibility in delivering their work in the most effective and efficient way possible. Since 2003, the Organization has supported the use of flexible working arrangements, which not

only help staff balance the demands of work with life outside the office but also respond to the challenge of finding new and better ways of managing people, time, office space and workloads. In its resolution 67/255, the General Assembly recalled its previous request to the Secretary-General to enhance the principles of work-life balance in the Secretariat (para. 30) and emphasized the need to foster a greater understanding among managers of the benefits of authorizing, where appropriate, remote work, family-friendly policies and more flexible working arrangements and the more effective working practices that such arrangements could facilitate.

115. Between 2011 and 2014, Secretary-General piloted new approaches to flexible working arrangements. The lessons learned indicated that while, generally, managers and staff were satisfied with the four options outlined in the original policy (see ST/SGB/2003/4), there was a need for a more flexible implementation of those four options. Similarly, both staff and managers required more guidance on how to make use of flexible work arrangements so as to ensure fairness and a shared understanding of opportunities and limitations. The Office of Human Resources Management therefore issued a series of implementation guides, available on the intranet, and has also incorporated updates in the Secretary-General's bulletin reflecting additional flexibility in the implementation of flexible working arrangements, with promulgation of the revised policy expected before the end of 2016. The Secretariat is working simultaneously with Umoja to ensure that flexible working arrangements are consistently recorded for accountability and reporting purposes.

116. Until all forms of flexible working arrangements are consistently recorded in Umoja, the Secretary-General, supported by FWA focal points and executive or human resources offices in departments and offices, will continue to collect data manually on the utilization of flexible working arrangements based on forms submitted to executive or human resources offices. The data show that although initial uptake of flexible working arrangements has been slow, the increased efforts of the Secretary-General to promote those arrangements to provide guidance to managers and staff members and to pilot more flexible options are having a positive impact. In 2015, a total of 3,045 staff members used flexible working arrangements, representing a 31 per cent increase from 2014. As outlined in figure VI below, since 2013, a steady increase has been seen in the use of telecommuting and staggered working hours. With the promulgation of the new Secretary-General's bulletin, which addresses managers' concern regarding compressed working hours, it is likely there will be an improvement in those figures as well. Under all four options, women use flexible working arrangements more than men. Promoting increased usage of flexible working arrangements is therefore an element of the gender equality strategy.

Figure VI
Variations in usage of flexible working arrangements, 2012-2015



C. Field needs and perspective

Background, progress made and imperatives

117. Following the submission of the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, entitled "Uniting our strengths for peace: politics, partnership and people" (A/70/95-S/2015/446), to the General Assembly and the Security Council, the Secretary-General has engaged in a full consultation with the field-based Secretariat entities to ensure that field needs and perspective are adequately reflected in human resources management policies. A number of policy and procedural improvements are currently under review to enable greater responsiveness to field needs.

118. The General Assembly, in its resolution 70/286 on cross-cutting issues, requested the Secretary-General, in the context of the next report on human resources management, to provide detailed analysis of the financial implications and justification for the measures proposed in the Secretary-General's report on the overview of the financing of peacekeeping operations (A/70/749) to expand the maximum duration of temporary duty assignments to six months to meet requirements directly linked to a mission start-up or expansion due to crisis situations.

119. The modality of temporary duty assignment (TDY) is a temporary loan of a staff member from a field operation, Headquarters, offices away from Headquarters or the regional commission to another United Nations entity for the purpose of rapidly providing the receiving entity with highly qualified and experienced staff for urgent, time-bound surge capacity needs.

120. Temporary duty assignments are vital tools which enable the Organization to deploy in-house expertise urgently and quickly to meet immediate, critical and urgent operational requirements. In dynamic, fast-paced field operations, the availability of this tool has been critical, in particular in situations of mission start-up, expansion or surge and mission liquidation, as well as in fulfilling other urgent, time-bound support requirements, for example, the filling of urgent gaps in oftentimes precarious security situations, and rapid response to changes in substantive mandates and to emergencies and critical-incident situations such as that created by the earthquake in Haiti.

121. Flexibility in extending the maximum duration, from three to six months, of a staff member's travel status in a field operation is considered critical, based on an analysis demonstrating that the three-month limit on travel status in field missions may often be too short. At the start-up phase, a mission operating in the midst of a crisis or post-crisis situation is expected to mount an operation that delivers on its mandates from day one of its authorization. In all facets of such a situation, including deployment of staff members, there is normally no existing capacity. That capacity has to be built up from scratch, with efforts heavily focused on operational activities. During this early period, there are essential activities that are critical to setting out the infrastructure and laying the groundwork for the mounting and sustaining of a functional and ultimately successful operation aimed at implementing the mission's mandate. Consequently, a start-up mission needs to rely on highly experienced staff with the requisite skills, to be deployed at very short notice, to perform mission-critical functions. Extending the use of temporary duty assignments to six months will provide additional flexibility in utilizing critical in-house expertise during the essential early period of a mission or crisis situation, pending approval of resource requirements, while allowing for the regular filling of positions through the established process.

122. A longer time frame for a temporary duty assignment would ensure continuity of the institutional knowledge developed by those staff deployed on such an assignment at the start-up stage of the mission and would also ensure consistency with respect to those staff members who have established a rapport and good relationships with relevant stakeholders, such as government officials, vendors and members of a United Nations country team. The experience derived from the start-up of the United Nations Mission in Colombia demonstrates that the lack of continuity could potentially hinder efforts to expedite the establishment of the Mission's operations. Another lesson learned from the start-up of the United Nations Mission in Colombia is that utilization of temporary duty assignments of three months' duration are cumbersome administratively owing to constant turnover; still another lesson is that covering the same function under these circumstances becomes significantly more expensive, as each rotation involves additional travel expenses. Similarly, within the context of an extreme emergency, such as the fight against the Ebola virus including the deployment of the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response, the temporary duty assignment is the only modality that allows for an extremely rapid deployment, given that it is hardly possible for the imperative needs of meeting the start-up requirements, reaching a critical mass and ensuring some acceptable level of business continuity to be met concurrently within a 90-day time frame.

123. During the surge or expansion of a mission, often following a mandate change authorizing additional personnel, the temporary duty assignment is an equally

important tool for ensuring that the new or adjusted functions are being fulfilled by qualified complementary staff at short notice, pending the completion of the regular recruitment process. Under such scenarios, a maximum deployment period of three months for temporary duty assignments may prevent the mission from ensuring business continuity during the early days of the mandate change and may thereby jeopardize effective mandate delivery. Finally, at the liquidation stage, closing missions regularly see their staff members depart to avail themselves of other opportunities. However, they are unable to attract candidates willing to deploy to a closing mission at the very moment when it must depend on the presence of highly experienced staff for support in the liquidation process over a period that may exceed three months.

124. The Secretary-General analysed the use of temporary duty assignments during the 2014/15 budget cycle for the following missions: the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS), the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) and a few smaller special political missions in the region. There was diversity both in the functions for which temporary duty assignments were utilized and in the categories of staff deployed: 72 per cent of staff deployed on temporary duty assignments provided support in various functional areas of mission support, 15 per cent in substantive areas and 14 per cent in security. Thirty-five per cent of staff deployed on temporary duty assignments were national staff, 47 per cent were in the Field Service category and 18 per cent were in the Professional category.

125. In terms of the financial implications of temporary duty assignments, MINUSCA received 90 staff on such assignments during the financial period 2014-2015 in a surge situation; and spent $1,193,284 on travel costs and daily subsistence allowance for staff on temporary duty assignments, while the releasing missions spent $1,440,083 on gross salary for the same period. UNAMID spent about $1 million on staff costs for their staff deployed to other United Nations operations on temporary duty assignments. Such expenditure by UNAMID reflects the Organization's efforts to use the temporary duty assignment modality judiciously, inasmuch as many temporary duty assignment resources of UNAMID consisted of UNAMID staff placed in other missions on temporary duty assignment while awaiting the (re)issuance of residence visas, to enable them to work in the Sudan. It should be noted, however, that the costs related to temporary duty assignment deployments are partially offset by the costs that would be incurred in any case by the receiving mission through its recruitment of labour to perform functions during the period in question.

126. In addition to allowing missions to effectively deliver on their mandates during start-up or expansion, an extension of the maximum period of temporary duty assignment to six months would also be in harmony with the policies for travel status within the Secretariat. Currently, staff rule 4.8 (a) provides for a maximum duration of six months in which a staff member can be in travel status at a duty station other than a field mission.

127. In the area of staffing, the consultations with field-based entities have revealed a need to relax the restriction on regularizing staff members who have been issued a temporary appointment so as to enable the Organization to respond to peace, security and humanitarian crises. The General Assembly, in paragraph 26 of section III.B of resolution 51/226 of 3 April 1997, decided that persons on short-term appointment filling regular budget posts or extrabudgetary posts of one year or more could not apply for or be appointed to their current post within six months of the end of their current service. Pursuant to that resolution, the ability of staff holding a temporary appointment to apply and be appointed to the position they have encumbered is currently limited.

128. Given the unprecedented exponential growth of the Organization's peace and field operations in the last two decades, the Organization has experienced difficulties in attracting the most qualified talent, particularly in duty stations that are the least desirable in terms of hardship conditions. In this context, the Secretary-General requests the General Assembly to allow temporary staff members who currently hold or have held a temporary appointment on a position to apply for and be appointed to the same position through the regular staff selection system, provided that the position is located at a field operation that is not at an H category duty station or special political missions at an H category duty station, including operations or special political missions based at Headquarters in New York. The Secretary-General also requests the exemption from the provision under paragraph 26, section III.B, of resolution 51/226, of staff members holding a temporary appointment in the Political, Peace and Humanitarian Network, exclusively dedicated to providing substantive backstopping to a field-based peacekeeping mission or special political mission. This modification of the previous resolution will merely allow temporary appointment holders to participate in the regular staff selection process in order to demonstrate their qualifications on an equal footing with all other applicants.

D. Staff health and well-being

Background, progress made since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 67/255, and imperatives

129. A global, dynamic, adaptable and engaged workforce must be, by definition, a healthy workforce. The Organization cannot achieve its mandates if the members of its workforce are not medically fit for purpose, or if its personnel are unable to function in high-risk environments because of a lack of access to appropriate health care for emergency response or the medical supervision of chronic medical conditions.

130. The core health-related functions under the human resources agenda are set out in Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2011/4. Those functions include management of staff members' health and its interface with fitness to work, management of risks in the workplace, provision of medical advice to United Nations health-care facilities worldwide, and provision of advice to the Secretary General on medico-administrative issues.

131. The Organization makes significant investment in staff health, through internal health services, health insurance, medical evacuation and sick leave and disability entitlements. Despite this investment, absenteeism due to ill-health and, more

subtly, presenteeism (where the performance of staff who are physically present in the workplace is impaired by illness) pose a significant (and growing) challenge to the Organization's ability to deliver its mandates.

132. To achieve maximum effect with the limited resources available, occupational health activities need to be targeted to the areas of greatest potential impact. Prior to implementation of EarthMed (the United Nations electronic health record), there was very little data available to guide such decisions. EarthMed is now being used in all but one peacekeeping mission, and all but one of the offices away from Headquarters, and its use has recently expanded to include the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-operated clinics (formerly known as dispensaries). With this expansion, and some enhancements designed to leverage the implementation of Umoja (and other enterprise resource planning systems in the agencies, funds and programmes), there has been an increase in the ability to form a conception of key health challenges.

1. Identification of priorities for intervention

133. An analysis of data from EarthMed for the four-year period 2012-2015 shows that the three leading causes of lost working days are musculoskeletal disorders (18 per cent), mental health disorders (17 per cent) and trauma/injuries (12 per cent). Pension fund data shows that among these conditions, mental health disorders have the worst prognosis, accounting for 43 per cent of new disability claims. Health insurance data show that the most expensive conditions are malignancies, cardiovascular conditions, musculoskeletal conditions and diabetes, which will continue to generate after-service health insurance costs for decades to come.

134. Sick leave data currently available in EarthMed give an incomplete picture. Staff members can take a total of 27 days of sick leave (7 uncertified and 20 certified) before there is any requirement to submit information to the medical service. A change in the policy of EarthMed, which would require staff members to upload certificates directly into their EarthMed record, will allow medical services to collect and more easily review data after 20 days of certified sick leave.

135. With the roll-out of EarthMed, it is now possible to analyse epidemiologically the diseases affecting personnel, as recorded through actual clinic attendance. A pilot analysis of figures from two field missions was undertaken through examination of clinical diagnoses. Preventable infectious diseases (such as malaria, gastroenteritis, including typhoid, and skin infections), and preventable non-communicable diseases (such as musculoskeletal conditions), were predominant in the data.

136. Population health (also called public health) is the most cost-effective health intervention, a fact recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO) and by health systems around the world. Using the data which are now starting to be collected, the Organization will implement programmes to target malaria (and other vector-borne diseases), gastroenteritis and musculoskeletal conditions. For example, the recent emergence of Zika virus prompted a system-wide examination of mosquito control, and revealed very low levels of application of WHO guidelines. Efforts during 2016 focused on ensuring procurement of all necessary supplies, and working with duty stations to develop and implement vector control programmes. If successful, this effort will yield results not only for Zika, but also for malaria, chikungunya virus and dengue fever.

137. The Secretary-General will implement, more systemically and more comprehensively, evidence-based health promotion interventions in the worksite designed to prevent heart disease, stroke, hypertension, diabetes and risky behaviours including hazardous drinking, smoking and sedentary lifestyles.

138. Based on sick leave, insurance claims and clinic data, only those conditions that are diagnosed can be reported. Undiagnosed and untreated illness poses a significant organizational risk. Given the quantum of sick leave and disability claims attributable to mental health conditions, the first attempt at estimation of presenteeism focused on mental health. During 2015, almost 20,000 United Nations system staff members participated in a survey that was designed as a screening tool for measuring the burden of symptoms relating to mental health conditions of United Nations staff.

139. Data to date as derived from the analysis show high rates of psychological symptoms. Staff who completed the survey reported a sufficient number of symptoms to flag positive under the screening tools, according to the following percentages:

Psychological symptom	*Percentage flagging positive*
Generalized anxiety disorder	18
Major depressive disorder	22
Post-traumatic stress disorder	19
Hazardous drinking	23

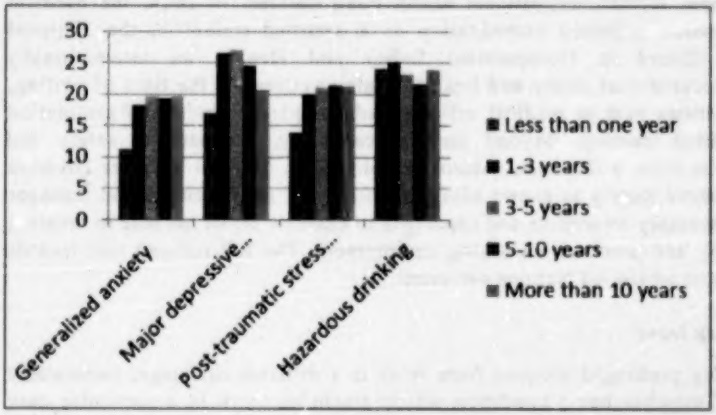
140. These rates are higher than would be expected in this population[3,4,5] Furthermore, there is a marked difference in the reporting of symptoms between individuals who have just started working for the Organization, and those whose service has been longer than one year, as demonstrated in figure VII below. The underlying contributing factors are the subject of further analysis, and will inform the development of a mental health strategy.

[3] Anxiety: WHO Mental Health Survey across 60 countries: the 12-month prevalence estimates: average 8.3 per cent for any anxiety disorder. See R. C. Kessler and others, "The global burden of mental disorders: an update from the WHO World Mental Health (WMH) surveys", *Epidemiol Psichiatr Soc.*, vol. 18, No. 1 (January-March 2009), pp. 23-33.

[4] Depression: WHO World Health Survey across 60 countries: 12-month prevalence averaged 3.2 per cent in participants without co-morbid physical disease and 9.3-23.0 per cent in participants with chronic conditions. See Ronald C. Kessler and Evelyn J. Bromet, "The epidemiology of depression across cultures", *Annual Review of Public Health*, vol. 34 (2013), pp. 119-138.

[5] Post-traumatic stress disorder: DSM-5 PTSD: 3 per cent; sub-threshold PTSD: an additional 3.6 per cent. See Katie A. McLaughlin and others, "Subthreshold posttraumatic stress disorder in the World Health Organization World Mental Health Surveys", *Biological Psychiatry*, vol. 77, No. 4 (15 February 2015), pp. 375-384.

Figure VII
Prevalence of reported psychological symptoms versus duration of employment



141. A multidisciplinary, multi-organizational working group has been established to consider the findings of the mental health survey and additional findings derived from focus groups that have been conducted as follow-up to the survey. This working group, comprising staff experts from the human resources, counselling and medical areas and from the Office of the Ombudsman, will develop, in collaboration with staff representatives, recommendations aimed at improving the psychosocial well-being of our workforce. Prevention, diagnosis, access to care, and maintaining the ability to work whenever possible will be key focus areas. A core component of maintaining or restoring the ability to work will be stigma reduction and education of our workforce, which have been successfully carried out for HIV.

2. System-wide occupational safety and health programme

142. For the first 70 years of its existence, the United Nations had no overarching occupational safety and health programme. In 2015, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination agreed to system-wide implementation of an occupational safety and health framework, encompassing occupational health and safety policy, oversight, risk analysis, incident management, and a programme of standards and compliance. The Organization will leverage the currently unused capacity of the electronic health record system to support implementation of this programme.

143. One of the biggest occupational health challenges at present is the lack of systematic incident reporting. The field occupational safety programme is a welcome recent addition, but this programme's incident reports are currently not linked to absenteeism data, thereby compromising the Organization's ability to generate cost data related to injuries. Enhancing EarthMed through inclusion of a safety module will allow the reporting of workplace injuries in a portal directly linked to the staff member's health record in EarthMed, and will allow the Medical Services Division to collect data on a much broader range of occupational incidents, and to quantify how much time is lost as a result of injuries or illnesses acquired in the workplace.

144. The above-mentioned occupational safety and health framework also requires capacity-building. Very few of the medical staff members employed by the United Nations possess formal occupational health qualifications. In 2016, the Medical Services Division achieved accreditation as a certified trainer in the National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health, an internationally recognized occupational safety and health training system. At the time of writing, 41 United Nations system medical officers had completed National Examination Board-accredited training. Beyond medical capability, occupational safety and health is, at its core, a line management responsibility. Medical Services Division staff should serve merely as expert advisers, with every staff member and manager having the necessary awareness and capability to exercise his or her role in creating a safe, healthy and productive working environment. The full roll-out will include the education of all United Nations personnel.

3. Managing sick leave

145. Managing prolonged absence from work is a difficult challenge, particularly when a staff member has a condition which precludes work in a particular duty station (but who is otherwise fit to work) or when he or she is being treated by a practitioner whose approach does not favour return to work, even when the preponderance of medical evidence suggests otherwise. In the two most frequent diagnostic categories (mental health and musculoskeletal disorders), an early return to work has a positive impact on outcomes, with prolonged leave leading to a poorer prognosis.

146. The Organization is developing specific tools and techniques to assist in the identification of staff members with the best potential for early return to work and those at greatest risk for prolonged absence. These methodologies, combined with the more rapid documentation of absence afforded by Umoja, will allow for more timely and more effective intervention, with the goal of preventing the creation of a spiral of long-term leave, chronic absence and, ultimately, disability.

147. Prolonged absence has a devastating impact, not only on the individual staff member, but on his or her organizational unit as well. Most sick leave is not backfilled, leaving the remaining members of the team short-handed, and putting them at risk of impaired performance or even illness, owing to their excessive number of work-hours. Once this spiral is generated, a team can rapidly lose the ability to deliver on mandates. Smaller offices, having less capacity to absorb the work of absent team members, are the most vulnerable. For this reason, a comprehensive management programme aimed at reducing duration of absence and increasing workplace reintegration is a high priority.

4. Health-care safety and quality

148. In addition to its role in the direct management of staff health, the Organization has a role in ensuring access to adequate health care for United Nations personnel through technical supervision of health-care staff members across the system entailing technical supervision of 437 health-care facilities. These are operated through the offices away from Headquarters (7), peacekeeping (390) and UNDP (40). In peacekeeping, there are 77 United Nations-operated (civilian) level 1 or level 1+ clinics and two United Nations-operated level 2 hospitals. There are 293 troop-contributing country-operated level 1 or 1+ clinics, 23 troop-contributing

country-operated level 2 hospitals and two troop-contributing country-operated level 3 hospitals.

149. Historically, the role of the Medical Services Division in technical supervision has been highly informal and ill defined, but the importance of the health-care function (greater in increasingly hazardous operating environments), the risks associated with underperformance and the quantum of costs associated with operating so many health-care facilities require appropriate levels of governance such as would be applied in any comparable health-care system.

150. At present, there is no performance benchmarking, no data collected on infection rates, adverse events and occupancy rates and no other normal health system overview data. Equipment and personnel are specified, but the processes of care and the management of quality have been left almost entirely to the discretion of the facility operators, be they United Nations staff members, contractors, commercial vendors or troop-contributing countries. Even simple, well-accepted quality initiatives such as the WHO surgical safety checklist and the WHO hand hygiene standards are not visibly and consistently implemented. The standard of care varies greatly across the system. This was recognized by the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, which recommended that systems for managing provision of health care, including standards, should be implemented.

151. To ensure appropriate, safe and timely health-care provision to United Nations staff members, who rely on United Nations-operated clinics and hospitals, the Secretary-General is commencing a programme of work to improve oversight and governance of health services. The work will range from improving scrutiny of qualifications and experience of personnel recruited or seconded to work in United Nations health-care facilities, to establishing a standards and accreditation scheme for health operations. An agreement has been reached with an international health-care standards and accreditation body on the use of its standards as a baseline for developing and adapting United Nations standards which will apply to all levels of United Nations-operated health care. A project designed to develop and implement these standards will commence in late 2016.

152. The Secretary-General has developed a methodology and implemented a programme of assessment and advisory visits for peacekeeping. Programme visits serve to assess the capacity of a Member State that has expressed interest in contributing health-care facilities, and to allow for needed advisory services prior to the deployment of health-care facilities. This programme reduces the likelihood of deployment of hospitals and clinics that are underprepared and unequipped to deliver within the challenging environment of the United Nations.

153. The complex environment of United Nations operations presents many challenges with respect to maintaining the fitness, health and engagement of its workforce. To meet these challenges, the Organization must leverage efficiencies gained through implementation of data systems and redeploy resources to implement targeted initiatives whose goal is to improve health, reduce costs and increase staff satisfaction.

IV. The way forward: a more integrated human resources management framework

Introduction

154. The changing global context and evolving mandates have led the Organization to undertake a number of management reform initiatives with the objective of making the Secretariat more efficient, effective and accountable. The current approach to human resources management is largely based on a proposal presented 10 years ago (see the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Investing in people" (A/61/255)) on a new strategy focused on integrated talent management. While the HR strategy has evolved and steady progress has been made in the area of talent management, many HR processes are currently not yet fully integrated. There is also an opportunity for HR to partner more closely with those in other administrative functional areas, programme managers and staff in delivering Organization mandates.

155. While the numerous General Assembly mandates and oversight body recommendations in recent years on the topic of human resources management provide useful guidance on continued HR reform, various recent initiatives have underscored the need for a more global, holistic and integrated approach. The following factors further necessitate and inform the need for a human resources framework:

(a) An analysis of enterprise risks as part of the enterprise risk management programme revealed that lack of a comprehensive HR strategy represents a key organizational risk;

(b) The new staff selection and managed mobility system requires HR to adapt talent management processes to the needs of job networks, with new approaches to facilitating staff mobility and network-level workforce planning;

(c) The adoption by the General Assembly of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, setting out the new Sustainable Development Goals, including global Goal 5 on gender equality, underscores the need for more attention to be focused on diversity and inclusion;

(d) The implementation of Inspira and Umoja, which represent significate technological transformation platforms, has introduced new, globally standardized means of working and the opportunity for greater efficiency;

(e) Proposals for a new global service delivery model, building on lessons learned from the global field support strategy, are addressing the question how best to organize all administrative functions;

(f) In the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, the need was expressed for more field-focused HR policies so as to facilitate talent readiness in crisis settings and the critical importance of efficient recruitment, onboarding and separation was emphasized;

(g) Informal feedback received from various HR stakeholders on strengths and opportunities for improvement (as solicited by the Office of Human Resources Management) has highlighted the importance of the provision of more efficient services by HR and the need for it to be more flexible, solution-oriented and collaborative.

While it can be argued that the Organization is currently dealing with numerous administrative reforms, the human resources management framework must evolve so as to focus scarce resources on driving the most important HR-related improvements.

156. There are a number of challenges that need to be overcome as the Organization looks ahead to building a more efficient and effective human resources management framework. These include, but are not limited to, fragmentation of the HR organization; cumbersome and non-standardized HR processes; complex policies; lack of process and data integration among HR information systems; and slow progress towards achieving gender equality and other diversity-related goals.

A. Enhancing human resources management for the global Secretariat

157. To deliver on its mandates, the Organization requires a competent, diverse, adaptable and engaged workforce. Human resources management encompasses multiple key stakeholders, ranging from Member States who wish results to be delivered cost-effectively to programme managers who want human resources management to support delivery of their mandates and individual staff who seek career advancement opportunities and seamless HR entitlements and benefits services. Based on preliminary analysis of the challenges outlined above, and building on past reforms, the Secretary-General has articulated three overarching themes and the associated results that need to be achieved:

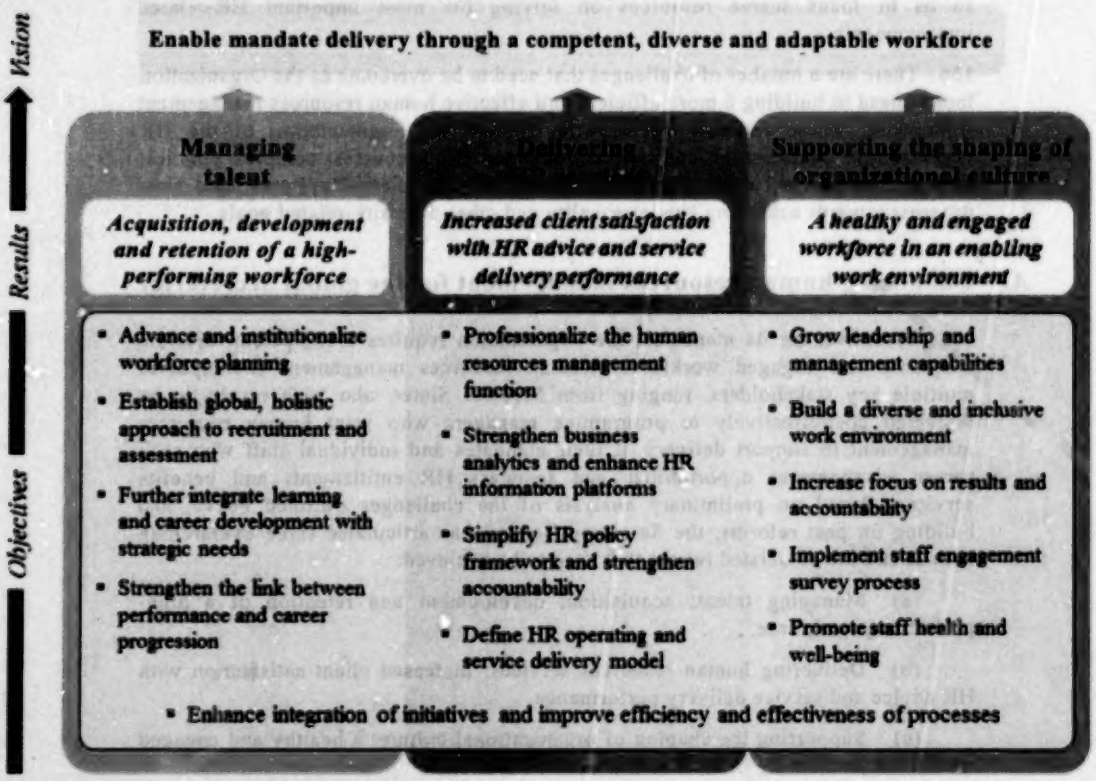
(a) Managing talent: acquisition, development and retention of a high-performing workforce;

(b) Delivering human resources services: increased client satisfaction with HR advice and service delivery performance;

(c) Supporting the shaping of organizational culture: a healthy and engaged workforce performing in an enabling work environment.

158. The framework is therefore built upon a set of mutually reinforcing objectives associated with these three thematic areas, as depicted in figure VIII below:

Figure VIII
The integrated human resources management framework


Vision
Results
Objectives
Enable mandate delivery through a competent, diverse and adaptable workforce
Managing talent
Acquisition, development and retention of a high-performing workforce
Delivering
Increased client satisfaction with HR advice and service delivery performance
Supporting the shaping of organizational culture
A healthy and engaged workforce in an enabling work environment
Advance and institutionalize workforce planning
Establish global, holistic approach to recruitment and assessment
Further integrate learning and career development with strategic needs
Strengthen the link between performance and career progression
Professionalize the human resources management function
Strengthen business analytics and enhance HR information platforms
Simplify HR policy framework and strengthen accountability
Define HR operating and service delivery model
Grow leadership and management capabilities
Build a diverse and inclusive work environment
Increase focus on results and accountability
Implement staff engagement survey process
Promote staff health and well-being
Enhance integration of initiatives and improve efficiency and effectiveness of processes

1. Managing talent

159. While the Secretary-General continues to develop and implement a comprehensive and integrated talent management framework, further effort is required to streamline, standardize and align the processes within the four pillars of talent management. Talent management needs to be approached more holistically at the job network level, not at the individual entity or hiring manager level. This approach will enable the Organization to exercise full transparency in respect of global talent needs in order to make better decisions in all talent management processes.

The objectives for managing talent are to:

(a) **Advance and institutionalize workforce planning.** Building on the next steps listed in paragraph 35 above, workforce planning needs to be mainstreamed as a management process led by each entity and closely linked to each entity's mandate, strategy and budget, with HR as facilitator of the process;

(b) **Establish a global, holistic approach to recruitment and assessment.** Staffing should be guided by the needs identified through workforce planning and provide solutions that leverage talent already within the Organization through

systematic learning, career development and effective performance management. The Secretary-General would take the lead, leveraging HR officers outside Headquarters, to deliver staffing as an integral part of talent management which would build and expand on changes introduced through the new staff selection and managed mobility system;

(c) **Further integrate learning and career development with strategic needs.** The Secretary-General would play a leadership role in ensuring that strategic learning and career support goals of all departments and offices are aligned globally, conducting a system-wide needs analysis on learning as it pertains to mandate delivery, strengthening links between learning and workforce planning analysis, providing enhanced learning and development platforms, creating products and tools that help staff cope with organizational change, and improving the quality of and access to learning programmes and tools, especially management and leadership development opportunities;

(d) **Strengthen the link between performance and career progression.** The Secretary-General will also provide increased human resources expertise and support to managers, and increase the consistency and transparency of the performance management system;

(e) **Enhance integration of initiatives and improve efficiency and effectiveness of processes.** Further integration of talent management initiatives would result in timely placement of talent for delivery of the Organization's mandates. In addition, the efficiency and effectiveness of HR processes should be monitored and evaluated in line with a set of key performance indicators and targets as well as through customer satisfaction surveys. Service providers and stakeholders within the process should be held accountable for making improvements and achieving the service standards established by the Organization for their area of responsibility.

2. Delivering human resources services

160. The second theme of the evolved human resources management framework, delivering HR services, emphasizes the key components of service delivery: people, process and technology, as well as the monitoring and governance mechanism that underpins it. This will be undertaken in full alignment with the global service delivery model.

161. The objectives for delivering HR services are to:

(a) **Simplify the HR policy framework and strengthen accountability.** A simplified and strengthened human resources policy framework will empower managers and staff members and enable the Office of Human Resources Management to be a more strategic partner in mandate delivery;

(b) **Define the HR operating and service delivery model.** Within the construct of the global service delivery model, the Office of Human Resources Management shall take the lead role in defining roles and responsibilities of staff members who provide human resources management services and the governance arrangements for the HR service delivery globally; global reorganization of human resources management is required, including a full review of delegated authorities and reporting lines;

(c) **Strengthen business analytics and enhance HR information platforms.** In leveraging accurate and timely data and information, human resources management requires that business analytics be strengthened as a core function in order to support decision-making, organizational change and policy implementation. In addition, information management platforms must continue to be enhanced to meet the evolving needs of HR;

(d) **Professionalize the human resources management function.** To ensure provision of high-quality services, i.e., in a timely manner and at a reasonable cost, while striving to create a satisfying experience for customers, the Secretary-General will set common standards for enhancing professionalism and consistency within the global human resources management community, harmonizing capacity development and promoting inter-organizational mobility in order to create more career development opportunities for HR staff.

3. Supporting the shaping of organizational culture

162. The third theme of the framework is supporting the shaping of organizational culture. In the future, human resources, as a strategic business partner for senior management, will play an active role in supporting the shaping of culture and resolving strategic challenges.

163. The objectives for supporting the shaping of organizational culture are to:

(a) **Grow leadership and management capabilities.** Leadership is critical in shaping organizational culture, enabling strong performance and achieving organizational goals. The Secretary-General will therefore continue to implement a leadership and management model that emphasizes open communication, just-in-time support for managers and leaders, and better alignment of performance measures with the organizational expectations and skills that are needed for career development;

(b) **Build a diverse and inclusive work environment.** The Secretary-General will continue to work towards improving geographical representation and promoting gender equality, among other diversity- and inclusion-related initiatives under way across the Organization. This includes enhancing the necessary accountability systems and policies that enable respect for diversity and inclusive behaviour;

(c) **Increase the focus on results and accountability.** The Secretary-General will continue to work towards creating an environment that is results-oriented while ensuring that managers and staff members are held responsible and accountable for their performance;

(d) **Implement the staff engagement survey process.** To obtain feedback on issues affecting staff members and to measure staff engagement, the Secretary-General will introduce a yearly staff engagement survey. Survey results will guide HR in developing targeted strategies for addressing cultural and structural factors;

(e) **Promote staff health and well-being.** The Secretary-General will provide technical advice and expertise aimed towards supporting senior management in the implementation of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination occupational safety and health framework, lead the development of a system-wide mental health and well-being strategy and implement

targeted programmes designed to address communicable and non-communicable diseases in our staff population. Improved systems for professionalizing the management of clinical health-care services will be developed and implemented.

B. Anticipated benefits, conclusion and next steps

164. The evolving human resources management framework would focus on delivering the following benefits: (a) improved individual and organizational performance; (b) a more engaged and motivated workforce; (c) improved quality of policy advice and strategic support; (d) more effective use of resources; (e) increased consistency of service delivery; and (f) more rapid response times.

165. The Secretary-General is working on the detailed plan and road map for the implementation of the human resources management framework and offers to submit a more detailed proposal to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session.

166. As evaluation of customer needs — and wants — is essential to continued reform, the Office of Human Resources Management will seek more input from stakeholders so as to ensure that the framework presented below focuses on the right priorities.

V. Action to be taken by the General Assembly

167. The General Assembly is requested to take note of the present report and to request the Secretary-General to submit a detailed proposal on the evolving human resources framework at its seventy-third session.

168. The Secretary-General requests that the General Assembly approve the following:

(a) The proposal that staff members in the General Service and related categories be allowed to apply for P-1, P-2 and P-3 positions that are not earmarked for the young professionals programme;

(b) The removal of the G-to-P element from the young professionals programme so that the positions subject to the system of desirable ranges at the P-1 and P-2 levels will be exclusively filled by successful candidates from unrepresented or underrepresented Member States;

(c) The extension of the period of time for successful candidates from the young professionals programme to remain on the roster from two to three years;

(d) The phasing out of the legacy competitive examination rosters by December 2018;

(e) The proposal for a staff member who currently holds or has held a temporary appointment on a position to apply for and be appointed to that same position through the regular staff selection system, provided that the position is located at a field operation that is not at an H category duty station or a special political mission at an H category duty station, including operations or special political missions based at Headquarters in New York;

(f) The setting of the earnings limit for retired staff members in receipt of pension benefits to the monetary equivalent of up to 125 working days per calendar year at the level at which the individual separated from service;

(g) The flexibility of extending the maximum duration for a staff member to be on travel status from Headquarters, offices away from Headquarters or a regional commission duty station to a field operation from three to six months;

(h) An exception to paragraph 26 of section III.B of resolution 51/226 for staff members holding a temporary appointment in the Political, Peace and Humanitarian Network (POLNET) who are exclusively providing substantive backstopping to a field-based peacekeeping mission or special political mission;

(i) The reduction of the standard posting period for position-specific job openings from 60 days to 30 days for the Professional and higher categories.

VI. Summary of follow-up action taken to implement requests of the General Assembly in its resolutions 63/250, 65/247, 67/255, 68/252 and 68/265 and requests and recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions endorsed by the General Assembly

A. General Assembly

Reference in resolution	*Action taken to implement request*
Resolution 63/250	**Human resources management**
Section II	**Contractual arrangements and harmonization of conditions of service**
Paragraph 13	Section III.A above contains an update on the implementation of human resources reforms
Resolution 65/247	**Human resources management**
Section VI	**Contractual arrangements**
Paragraph 58	Completed: see administrative instruction ST/AI/2013/1 and Corr.1 on the administration of fixed-term appointments
Resolution 67/255	**Human resources management**
Section I	**Human resources management reform**
Paragraph 9	See section III.A above on the implementation of human resources management reforms
Paragraph 13	The human resources management scorecard is a tool used to measure progress towards meeting staffing imperatives, such as gender and geographical representation. Merit remains the main criteria in selection decisions, in accordance with Article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations. See also section III.B.2 above on staff selection and recruitment
Paragraph 16	See section III.B.3 above on performance management
Paragraph 20	See section III.B.4 above on learning and career development
Paragraph 21	See section III.B.4 above on learning and career development
Paragraphs 24 and 25	See section III.A.2 above on continuing appointment review
Section II	**Recruitment and staffing**
Paragraph 34	See section III.B.2 (a) above on recruitment timelines and assessments
Paragraphs 38, 39, 41 and 42	See section III.B.2 (c) above on the young professionals programme
Paragraph 43	See section III.B.2 (f) above on efforts to achieve gender equality

Reference in resolution	*Action taken to implement request*
Section III	**Comprehensive assessment of the system of geographical representation**
Paragraph 46	See the report of the Secretary-General on the review of the system of desirable ranges (A/71/323/Add.2)
Section V	**Composition of the Secretariat**
Paragraph 61	See the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics" (A/71/360)
Paragraph 63	The Under-Secretary-General for Management promulgated administrative instruction ST/AI/2013/4 on consultants and individual contractors, which contains a provision whereby individuals with specific expertise who volunteer their services to the United Nations for no fee and who travel on behalf of the Organization may, subject to clearance by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, and on a case-by-case basis, be issued an individual contract with a token fee (one-dollar-a-year contract). Additional guidelines on the approval process and conditions are currently under preparation
Paragraph 64	See the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics" (A/71/360)
Paragraph 65	The request was addressed by the Secretary-General in the context of his report entitled "Overview of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations: budget performance for the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013 and budget for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015" (A/68/731, paras. 166-168)
Paragraph 66	See section III.B.2 (f) above on efforts to achieve gender equality
Section VI	**Consultants**
Paragraph 67	A revised administrative instruction on consultants and individual contractors (ST/AI/2013/4) was issued on 19 December 2013, providing detailed information on the selection process for consultants and specifying that every effort should be made to shortlist a minimum of three candidates from the widest possible geographical basis. The instruction also sets out the conditions under which consultants can be engaged, including that they may be engaged only when the required services cannot be met from within the current staff resources of the Secretariat owing to a lack of specialized knowledge and/or expertise or capacity. Programme managers are required to certify in a supplementary form that the services of a consultant cannot be met from in-house capacity and to indicate the nationalities and gender of the candidates considered for the consultancy See also the report of the Secretary-General on gratis personnel, retired staff and consultants and individual contractors (A/69/292/Add.1)
Paragraph 68	In accordance with the conditions set out in administrative instruction ST/AI/2013/4, the assignments of a consultant must be of a temporary nature and the tasks capable of being performed and completed within a limited and specified period of time. Where an individual contractor is temporarily engaged to perform duties and functions similar to those of a staff member, a clear strategy is to be put in place for a long-term regular staffing solution

Reference in resolution	*Action taken to implement request*
Paragraph 69	See the report of the Secretary-General on gratis personnel, retired staff and consultants and individual contractors (A/69/292/Add.1)
Section VII	**Staff-management relations**
Paragraph 71	The Secretary-General's bulletin on the Staff-Management Committee has been revised (ST/SGB/2011/6/Rev.1) and a new administrative instruction on staff management relations issued (ST/AI/2014/3)
Section X	**Other matters**
Paragraph 77	See the report of the Secretary-General on the practice in disciplinary matters and cases of possible criminal behaviour, 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (A/71/186)
Resolution 68/252	**Human resources management**
Section I	**Human resources management reform**
Paragraph 5	See section III.B.3 above on performance management
Paragraph 6	Completed: an information briefing was held with the Fifth Committee on 6 May 2014
Section II	**Composition of the Secretariat**
Paragraph 13	See the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics" (A/71/360)
Paragraph 16	See section III.B.1 above on workforce planning
Paragraph 17	See the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics" (A/71/360)
Paragraph 18	See section III.B.2 (c) above on the young professionals programme
Section III	**Practice of the Secretary-General in disciplinary matters and possible criminal behaviour**
Paragraphs 21 and 23	See the report of the Secretary-General on the practice in disciplinary matters and cases of possible criminal behaviour, 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (A/71/186)
Resolution 68/265	**Mobility framework**

B. Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

Reference in the report of the Advisory Committee	*Action taken to implement request/recommendation*
Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions contained in document A/67/545	
Staff selection system	
Paragraph 13	See section III.B.1 above on workforce planning
Paragraphs 33 and 36	See section III.B.4 above on learning and career development
Paragraph 44	See section III.B.2 (c) above on the young professionals programme
Paragraph 49	See III.B.2 (e) above on outreach
Paragraph 58	See section III.B.2 (f) above on efforts to achieve gender equality
Paragraphs 138, 145 and 146	See the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics" (A/71/360)
Paragraph 157	Completed: see the report of the Secretary-General on amendments to the Staff Rules (A/71/258)
Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions contained in document A/68/523	
Paragraphs 5 and 10	See the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics" (A/71/360)
Paragraph 18	See the report of the Secretary-General on the practice in disciplinary matters and cases of possible criminal behaviour, 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (A/71/186)
Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions contained in document A/68/580	
Paragraphs 5 and 7	The Secretary-General established an interdepartmental working group tasked with addressing all issues related to supporting staff members and families impacted by malicious acts, natural disasters and other emergency incidents. Seventeen recommendations were proposed to the Management Committee, all of which were endorsed and 16 of which have been implemented, including revisions to appendix D to the United Nations Staff Regulations and Staff Rules, which are before the General Assembly for approval (A/71/258). The one outstanding issue is the implementation of special leave with full pay in situations of emergency

Annex

Summary of progress made in developing a comprehensive workforce planning system

Type	*Activity*	*Progress made since the adoption of resolution 68/252*
Entity-based approaches	Medical Services pilot project	• A practical example of strategic workforce planning methodology (developed by the workforce planning advisory group in 2014) was validated and made available
		• Gaps in capacity related to achieving the strategy to improve occupational health and safety, and reduce absenteeism due to sick leave were identified and filled
	Staff retirements	• Member States were provided with forecasted retirement reports for their nationals online through HR Insight
		• Entities were provided with monitoring and reporting tools to facilitate the forecasting and timely replacement of staff reaching the mandatory age of separation
		• The replacement rate of retirees was analysed and it was determined that only 25 per cent of retirements in a sample were replaced without a gap in service
		• A policy change requiring the advertisement of vacancies at least 12 months in advance of staff reaching the mandatory age of separation (ST/AI/2016/1) was introduced
	Field missions/ Global Field Support Strategy-related	• Multiple workforce planning pilot projects were conducted at field entities and 14 civilian staffing reviews were completed as at 31 December 2015, which led to the recommendation to abolish 1,818 positions and the nationalizing of 597 positions
		• The 2015 Workforce Planning User Guide for field operations, following a methodology developed in coordination with the Office of Human Resources Management, was piloted at two missions (see A/70/749, annex IX, para. 27)
		• An online workforce planning training course was developed as part of a "Fundamentals of Field HR" certification programme, now completed by 98 staff members
Job network-based approaches	Young professionals programme	• The young professionals programme staffing needs continued to be forecast to ensure sufficient candidates on rosters for a two-year period to meet future needs
		• Since 2011, 416 individuals have been rostered, of whom 202 (49%) have been selected, 130 (31%) remain on the roster, 48 (12%) have withdrawn or declined an offer and 36 (9%) have reached an expiration date (as at April 2016)

Type	*Activity*	*Progress made since the adoption of resolution 68/252*
	Language rosters	• Planning to fill language rosters, facilitate the placement of qualified candidates on rosters and oversee the selection of candidates for language positions continued, in collaboration with the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management
	Field rosters	• Rosters were used for 2,410 of 2,611 (92%) of all selections in field operations and hard-to-fill positions were identified based on analysis of 201 failed recruit-from-roster selections, which accounted for 8 per cent of total selections since 2014
		• Staffing needs and vacancy gaps on occupational rosters were analysed across all field missions and 93 roster-building exercises were conducted using generic job openings, resulting in 4,744 clearances since 2014
	Job code standardization and budget alignment	• Job codes were established as the uniform standard for functionally categorizing all positions and 2,528 job codes were restructured into 47 job families and 9 job networks in preparation for implementation of the mobility and career development framework
		• Standardized job codes in Umoja were implemented for more than 28,000 positions in Umoja (UE-1) to overcome the previous issue in the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) system where 88 per cent of positions had no title
		• Work commenced on the Umoja (UE-2) project focused on ensuring that all positions proposed in budgets are categorized based on the standardized list of job codes
	POLNET: workforce planning for mobility	• A five-year retirement forecast for the Political, Peace and Humanitarian Network (POLNET) and identified: (a) 274 positions (approximately 55 per year) to be included in the vacancy track compendiums over the next five years; and (b) 11 job codes that should be targeted for outreach purposes based on the volume of retirements and historical data on the time needed to fill positions